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ESSAYS  
HISTORICAL AND LITERARY  
VOLUME II



# Essays

## Historical and Literary

BY

JOHN FISKE

VOLUME II

IN FAVOURITE FIELDS

*"If thou wouldst press into the infinite, go out to all  
parts of the finite."*

— GOETHE.

New York

THE MACMILLAN COMPANY

LONDON: MACMILLAN & CO., LTD.

1902

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Set up and electrotyped October, 1902.

Norwood Press  
J. S. Cushing & Co. — Berwick & Smith  
Norwood Mass. U.S.A.

176  
F54C  
v.2

176  
F54C  
v.2  
JULY '24


## PREFATORY NOTE

I WISH to express my cordial acknowledgments to Harper & Brothers ; also to the editor of the *Cosmopolitan*, in whose magazines three of the Essays in this volume have appeared.

ABBY MORGAN FISKE.

WESTGATE,

October 15, 1902.



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I

OLD AND NEW WAYS OF TREATING  
HISTORY





# I

## OLD AND NEW WAYS OF TREATING HISTORY

It would not be easy to name any king who has left behind him a more odious memory than Henry VIII. of England. The incidents of his domestic life have won for him a solitary kind of immortality. The picture of him with which most of us have grown up from childhood is that of a Bluebeard who, as soon as he got tired of a wife, would have her beheaded and forthwith marry another. Probably the popular notion of his reign does not contain much more than this, unless it be a vague remembrance of his quarrel with Rome. But forty years ago Mr. Froude set before the world a very different conception of King Henry, in which he appears as a patriot ruler, endowed with many excellent qualities of mind and heart, and much to be pitied for the perversity of fortune which attended his selection of wives. In these conclusions Mr. Froude no doubt went rather too far, as is often the case when novel views are propounded. With regard to its general effects upon the English people, Henry's rule was, on the whole, eminently good; but the fierce reign of terror which counted Sir Thomas More among its victims is something to which one is not easily reconciled, and in the king's character there are features of the ruffian which no ingenuity can explain away. As for the Bluebeard notion,

however, it is to a great extent dissipated. The domestic tragedy remains as hideous and loathsome as ever, but in the case of the two queens who lost their heads, the king appears more sinned against than sinning. Catherine Howard unquestionably brought her fate upon herself, and in all probability the same is true of Anne Boleyn, who fares worse and worse as we learn more about her. The critical historian still finds much to condemn in Henry VIII., but between his verdict and that of the traditional popular opinion there is a very wide difference.

Another instance of such a wide difference is furnished by the conduct of Edward I. with reference to the disputed succession to the throne of Scotland. A few months ago<sup>1</sup> there was published a new edition of a rather dull romance which our grandfathers used to find entertaining, "The Scottish Chiefs," by Jane Porter. I doubt if it will get many readers now. In this book the greatest of English kings, a man who, for nobility of character, was like our Washington, is recklessly charged with tyranny and bad faith, while Bruce and Wallace are treated not merely as heroes—which is all right—but as faultless heroes; even such an act as the murder of the Red Comyn in the church at Dumfries is mentioned with approval. Curiously enough the views set forth in this romance have been traditional not only in Scotland but in England, so that when Mr. Robert Seeley, in 1860, published his book entitled "The Greatest of all the Plantagenets," his defence of King Edward took many people by surprise. The question was soon afterward handled by Freeman in such a way as to set it at rest.

<sup>1</sup> 1896.



Concerning Edward's entire good faith there is no more room for doubt.

Yet another and different kind of example of the havoc wrought upon popular opinions by critical investigation is furnished by the legend of William Tell. To our grandfathers that famous archer was as real a personage as Oliver Cromwell, though doubts on the subject had been expressed in Switzerland as long ago as 1598, the story was declared to be apocryphal by a learned Swiss clergyman, named Freuden-Berger, in 1760, and it was completely exploded by the Swiss historian Kopp in 1835. The persons called William Tell and Gessler never existed in Switzerland, contemporary chroniclers never mention them, the story first appeared in print one hundred and seventy-five years after the date, 1307, when its events were said to have occurred, and, moreover, it was copied from the book of a Danish historian, Saxo Grammaticus, written more than a century *before* 1307. In Saxo's book it is a Danish archer, named Palnatoki, who shoots an apple from his son's head, and the incident is placed in the year 950. The Swiss story is identical with the Danish story, and the latter is simply one version of a legend that is found in at least six different Teutonic localities, as well as in Finland, Russia, and Persia, and among the wild Samoyeds of Siberia. There can be little doubt that the story is older than the Christian era, and in the course of its wanderings it has been attached now to one locality and now to another, very much as the jokes and witticisms told a century ago of Robert Hall were in recent years ascribed to Henry Ward Beecher.

So many cherished traditions have been rudely upset as to produce a widespread feeling of helplessness with regard to historical beliefs. When one is so often proved to be mistaken, can one ever feel sure of being right? Or must we fall back upon the remark, half humorous, half cynical, once made by Sainte-Beuve, that history is, in large part, a set of fables, which men agree to believe in? The great critic should have put his remark into the past tense. Men no longer agree to believe in fables. All historical statements are beginning to be sifted. But this winnowing of the false from the true, the perpetual testing of facts and opinions, is not weakening history but strengthening it. After a vast amount of such criticism, destructive as much of it is, our views of the past are not less but more trustworthy than before.

The instances above cited may illustrate for us the first of the differences between the old and the new ways of treating history. The old-fashioned historian was usually satisfied with copying his predecessors, and thus an error once started became perpetuated; but in our time no history written in such a way would command the respect of scholars. The modern historian must go to the original sources of information, to the statutes, the diplomatic correspondence, the reports and general orders of commanding officers, the records of debates in councils and parliaments, ships' log-books, political pamphlets, printed sermons, contemporary memoirs, private diaries and letters, newspapers, broadsides, and placards, even perhaps to worm-eaten account books and files of receipts. The historian has not found the true path until he has learned to ransack such records of the past with the same untiring zeal

that animates a detective officer in seeking the hidden evidences of crime. If some other historian a century ago told the same story that we are trying to tell, he probably told it from fewer sources of information than we can now command; but if this is not the case, if a century has passed without increasing our direct information upon the story in hand, it has at least been a century of added human experience in general, so that even when we work upon the same materials as our predecessor we are likely to arrive at somewhat different conclusions. Our first rule, then, is never to rest contented with the statements of earlier historians, unless where the evidence behind such statements is no longer accessible. This is especially likely to occur with ancient history, for the various agencies for recording events were much less complete and accurate before than since the Christian era. We have a hundred ways of testing Macaulay's account of the expulsion of the Stuarts, where we have one way or no way of checking Livy's narrative of the Samnite Wars; in the one case our knowledge is like the light of midday, in the other it is but a twilight.

There are periods, however, in ancient history, concerning which our authorities are luminous, and the picture is doubtless, on the whole, as correct as those which can be framed for modern periods. The literary monuments of Greek life in the age of the Peloponnesian War—the narratives of Thucydides and Xenophon, the works of the great tragedians, the wit and drollery of Aristophanes, the dialogues of Plato, the speeches of Andokides and Lysias—with the remains of sculpture and architecture, bring that ancient society wonderfully near to us. Other periods in Athens and

Jerusalem, Alexandria and Rome, stand out before us with truthful vividness. But on the whole the registration of material for history has been much more full and consecutive since the Christian era than before it, and to this general statement the darkest of what we call the Dark Ages, as, for example, the period of Merovingian decline in the seventh and eighth centuries, forms but a partial exception. The registry of laws and edicts was supplemented by the innumerable chronicles which we owe to the marvellous industry of the monks. He who looks over a few of the seven hundred majestic volumes of the Abbé Migne's collection, will come into the fit frame of mind for admiring that gigantic and patient labour which most of us fail to revere only because its results have never appealed to our sense of sight. For literary excellence, monkish Latin has little to charm us as compared with the diction of Cicero, but in its vast treasure-houses are enshrined the documents upon which rest in great part the foundations of our knowledge of the beginnings of modern society. Ages which have left behind so much written registry of themselves are not to be set down as wholly dark.

What would English history be without the monastic chronicles of Malmesbury, of St. Albans, of Evesham, of Abingdon, and many another? If you would understand the mental condition of our forefathers in King Alfred's time, with regard to diseases, medicaments, and household science in general, there is nothing like the mass of old documents published by the Record Office under the quaint title of "Leechdoms, Wortcunning, and Starcraft of England."<sup>1</sup> Or

<sup>1</sup> Ewald, "Paper and Parchment," p. 279.

if it be the social condition of England under the later Plantagenets that interests us, nothing could serve our purpose better than the political poems and songs of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries from that same repository of national archives. The Year Books, too, containing the law reports from the eleventh century onward are an almost inexhaustible mine of material for studying the social growth of the people whose centres of national government are to-day at London and at Washington.

It is the increased facility of access to the national archives that has contributed more than anything else to the deeper and more accurate knowledge of English history which the past generation has witnessed. A few years ago it might have seemed that the seventeenth century had been exhaustively treated. With Ranke's masterly volumes and those of Guizot, with Carlyle's edition of the letters and speeches of Cromwell, and with Macaulay's fascinating narrative, one might have supposed that for some time to come there would be no further need for new books on that period. Yet, forthwith, came Mr. Rawson Gardiner, and began to rewrite the whole century. His first volume started with the year 1603, and his fourteenth arrives only at the year 1649; long life to the author! For the time which it covers, his book supersedes all others. The work was made necessary by the wholesale acquisition of fresh sources of information, settling vexed questions, filling gaps in the chain of cause and effect, and throwing a bright light upon acts and motives heretofore obscure. This acquisition of new material is one among many instances of the results that have flowed from improved ways of keeping public archives; so



that a few words upon that subject may be not without interest.

Let us be thankful to our forefathers in the old country that they did not wilfully burn their public documents, but only hid them here and there, in garrets and cellars, sheds and stables, where, but for a merciful Providence, fire and vermin would long ago have made an end of them. In 1550 it was discovered that some important Chancery records had been eaten away by the lime in the wall against which they reposed, and a few years afterward Queen Elizabeth undertook to have suitable storage provided for all such things in the Tower of London. What passed for suitable storage we may learn from a letter written a hundred years later to King Charles II. by William Prynne, Keeper of the Records: "I endeavoured the rescue of the greatest part of them from that desolation, corruption, confusion, in which (through the negligence, nescience, or slothfulness of their former keepers) they had for many years by past lain buried together in one confused chaos under corroding, putrefying cobwebs, dust, filth, in the dark corner of Cæsar's Chapel in the White Tower, as mere useless reliques. . . . The old clerks [were] unwilling to touch them for fear of fouling their fingers, spoiling their clothes, endangering their eyesight and healths by their cantankerous dust and evil scent. In raking up this dung-heap . . . I found many rare, ancient, precious pearls and golden records. But all [these] will require Briareus his hundred hands, Argus his hundred eyes, and Nestor's centuries of years, to marshal them into distinct files, and make exact alphabetical tables of the several things, names, places

comprised within them.”<sup>1</sup> Yet for nearly two centuries after this appeal the priceless records went on accumulating in such places as the White Tower, the basement of which was long used for storing gunpowder, or in the Temple and Lincoln’s Inn, where many documents perished in flames as late as 1849. It was not until 1859 that a suitable building was completed in which the national archives of Great Britain at last found a worthy home.

At the same time there came a sudden end to the jealousy with which these materials for history were withheld from public inspection. Occasionally, in former days, some eminent scholar would be allowed access to such as were accessible. Thus, in 1679, Gilbert Barnet was permitted to use such papers as might be of help in completing his “History of the Reformation.” For such permission a warrant from the lord chamberlain or one of the secretaries of state was required, and there was red tape enough to deter all but the most persistent seekers. About 1850 the wise master of rolls, Lord Romilly, put an end to all this privacy, and now you can go to the Record Office and read the despatches of Oliver Cromwell or the letters of Mary Stuart as easily as you would go to a public library and look over the new books.

But this is not all. As fast as is practicable the state papers, chronicles, charters, court rolls, and other archives of Great Britain are published in handsome volumes carefully edited, so that the whole world may read them. Year by year enlarges the ability of the American scholar to inspect the sources of British history by visiting some large library on this side of the Atlantic.

<sup>1</sup> “Paper and Parchment,” p. 256.

I need not dwell upon these facts. One can easily see that the appearance of fresh material must now and then oblige us to reverse, and often to modify, our judgments upon men and events. The student of history who has once learned how to go to the source will never be satisfied with working at second hand. And the multiplication of sources goes on. What I have mentioned of the British archives has gone on in other countries, although it is not everywhere that access has been made so easy. Many secrets of European history are still locked up in the Vatican, to reward the persistent curiosity of a future generation. Meanwhile the Italian government publishes, in a series of magnificent folios, all the original material that it can find in Italian libraries concerning the discovery of America; and the publication, year by year, of the records of the India House at Seville keeps throwing fresh light upon that intricate subject. In such musty records there is no quarter from which valuable information may not be derived. A few years ago I showed, by a comparison of extracts from old Spanish account books, that the younger Pinzon, the commander of Columbus's smallest caravel in 1492, was not absent from Spain during the year 1506; and this little point went a long way toward settling two or three important historical questions.<sup>1</sup>

It is not only public documents that thus come forward to help us, but every year witnesses the publication of private memoirs and correspondence. What a flood of light is thrown upon the Wars of the Roses by the Paston Letters, written by members of a Norfolk family from 1422 to 1509. Public attention was first

<sup>1</sup> "Discovery of America," II., p. 68.

drawn to these papers about a century ago, but the last edition, published in 1872, contained more than four hundred letters never before printed. In recent years we have added to our resources for studying American history many new letters of Patrick Henry, George Mason, Gouverneur Morris, John Dickinson, Manasseh Cutler, the older and younger Tyler, and many others. Most important of all, in some respects, are the Diary and Letters of Thomas Hutchinson, last royal governor of Massachusetts, published in London about ten years ago by one of his great-grandsons; it is impossible to study this book without having one's conception of the beginnings of the American Revolution in some points slightly, in others profoundly, modified.

In curious ways things keep turning up for the first time or else attracting fresh attention. A certain beautiful map, made in Lisbon between September 7 and November 19, 1502, has been lying now for nearly four centuries in the Ducal Library at Modena, where it was left by the husband of Lucretia Borgia. About fifteen years ago it was noticed that this map contains a delineation of the peninsula of Florida, with twenty-two Spanish names on the coast, several of them misunderstood and deformed by the Portuguese draughtsman. As this is positive proof that Florida was visited by Spaniards before September 7, 1502, the long-neglected map has suddenly become a historical document of the first importance.

Again, during our Revolutionary War a certain British adventurer, named Charles Lee, was at one time the senior general under Washington in the Continental army. Having been taken prisoner by the

British and locked up in the City Hall at New York, he tried to mend his fortunes by giving treasonable aid to the enemy, and in an elaborate paper he unfolded what seemed to him the best plan for overthrowing the Americans. General Howe's secretary, Sir Henry Strachey, carried this paper home to England, with other papers, and stowed them all away in the library of his country house in Somerset. There, after a slumber of more than eighty years, Lee's treasonable paper was found, and it became necessary to rewrite nearly two years of our military history. Still more curious was the career of the manuscript "History of Plymouth," by William Bradford, one of the first governors of the colony. This precious manuscript was used and quoted by several New England writers, and came into the possession of the Rev. Thomas Prince, pastor of the Old South Church, who died in 1758. This learned antiquarian kept his books in a little room in the steeple, which he used as a study, and bequeathed them to the church.<sup>1</sup> After the British troops evacuated Boston in 1779, it was presently found that the Bradford MS. had vanished. Perhaps some officer had read it with interest and confiscated it to his own uses. At all events, it turned up in 1853 in the Bishop of London's palace at Fulham, and it has since been published, as the very corner-stone of New England history. A fragment of the same Governor Bradford's letter-book was found in a grocer shop in Halifax, Nova Scotia, and was published in 1794. This reminds one of the first folio of the Spanish historian Oviedo, printed in 1526. Of this valuable book only two copies are known to be in existence, and one

<sup>1</sup> Hill's "History of the Old South Church," II., p. 54.



of these was rescued from a butcher in Madrid just as he was tearing a sheet from it to wrap a sirloin of beef which a servant-girl had purchased. It has always been a matter of regret that we have had no minutes of the proceedings of the Congress which was assembled in New York in 1765 for considering the Stamp Act, but I am told that such minutes have lately been discovered in a chest of old papers, soaked and mouldy, under a leaky roof in a Maryland attic. But this is nothing to the Rip van Winkle slumber of Aristotle's essay on the Constitution of Athens, from which European scholars used to quote as late as the sixth century after Christ, but of which nothing has been seen since the ninth century until the other day a copy was found in an Egyptian tomb. On one side of the sheets of papyrus is an account of receipts and expenditures kept by the steward or bailiff of a gentleman's private estate in the years 78 and 79 after Christ; on the other side is the long-lost essay of Aristotle, a most valuable contribution to Greek history, which now, since its publication in 1891, may be read like any other Greek book. From other Egyptian tombs have been recovered a part of one of the lost tragedies of Euripides, interesting passages from Athenian orators, and the account of the Crucifixion from the Greek gospel attributed by the early Fathers to St. Peter,—an intensely interesting narrative, which was published in London in 1894.

In recalling such illustrations, one is in danger of straying from one's main thesis, and so I will only add that, with the progress of the arts, there are found various new ways of making original materials accessible. Here photography has done wonders. Old



parchments can be reproduced with strictest accuracy, with all their stains and rents and cracks and smooches, and with our magnifying-glass we may patiently scrutinize each small detail and satisfy ourselves as to whether it has been rightly interpreted.

A beautiful example of this is furnished by the book of an American scholar, whose premature death science mourns. "The Finding of Wineland," by Arthur Middleton Reeves, contains complete photographic facsimiles of the three famous Icelandic manuscripts which tell of the Norse discovery of America. Another example is the gigantic work of another American, Benjamin Stevens, who is publishing in London a hundred volumes of diplomatic correspondence relating to the American Revolution, the whole of it reproduced by photography. The time has thus arrived when the scholar, without stirring from his chimney-corner, may send by mail to distant countries and obtain strict copies of things that it would once have cost months of travelling to see. It is not hoped that the time will come when an occasional literary pilgrimage, with its keen pleasures, can be quite dispensed with; nor is it likely to come. But we see how much has been done toward bringing the historian face to face with his sources of information.

The increasing disposition to insist upon knowledge at first hand, which distinguishes the new from the old ways of treating history, is but one phase of the scientific and realistic spirit of the age in which we live. It is one of the marks of the growing intellectual maturity that comes with civilization. There is nothing to show that the highly trained minds of the present day are wider in grasp or deeper in pene

tration than those of many past ages, but in some respects they are more mature than those of any past age, and one chief symptom of this maturity is the strict deference paid to facts. This marks the historic spirit as it marks the scientific spirit. In children the respect for facts is very imperfectly developed. The presence of wild exaggeration or deliberate fiction in children's stories does not necessarily imply dishonesty or love of lying. The child's world is not coldly realistic, it is full of make-believe; it has subjective needs that demand expression even if objective truthfulness gets somewhat slighted. The Italians have a pithy proverb, *Si non e vero e ben, trovato*, which defies literal translation into English, but which means, If it isn't true, at all events, it hits the mark. In the childish type of a story, it is above all things desired to hit the mark, to produce the effect. Edification is the prime requisite; accuracy is subordinate. There never was an adult mind more scrupulously loyal to fact than that of Charles Darwin, but in a chapter of autobiography he says: "I may here confess that as a little boy I was much given to inventing deliberate falsehoods, and this was always done for the sake of causing excitement. For instance, I once gathered much valuable fruit from my father's trees and hid it in the shrubbery, and then ran in breathless haste to spread the news that I had discovered a hoard of stolen fruit."<sup>1</sup> This kind of romancing is not peculiar to children, but continues to characterize the untrained adult mind, as in the yarns of old soldiers and sailors, and it is liable to persist wherever one's professional pursuits call for intense devotion to some

<sup>1</sup> Darwin's "Life and Letters," I., p. 28.

immediate practical object. Strong partisanship in politics or in theology is thus unfavourable to accuracy of statement, and the advocates of sundry social reforms are noted for a tendency to "draw the long bow." Since edification is the first desideratum, the facts must be squeezed and twisted, if need be, so as to furnish it. "They can bear it, poor things," we can fancy our preacher saying; "they are used to it."

A certain obtuseness, or lack of sensitive perception, with regard to truthful accuracy has thus been widely prevalent among mankind. At times this has shown itself in the production of pseudonymous literature, or books bearing the names of other persons than their real authors. The two centuries preceding and the two centuries following the Christian era were especially an age in which pseudonymous literature was fashionable, and to this class belong some writings of great importance in the early Church. There was no dishonesty in this, no intention to deceive the public. It was simply one of the crude methods first adopted without premeditation when earnest preachers of novel doctrines sought to influence communities on a wide scale by the written rather than the spoken word. Any book that contained ideas known or believed to be those of some eminent teacher was liable to be ascribed to him as its author. And the claim, uncritically made, was uncritically accepted.

In this connection may be mentioned the common practice of ancient historians in inventing speeches. When Thucydides, for example, describes the interesting debate at Sparta that ushered in the Peloponnesian War, he makes all the characters talk in the first person,—the Corinthian envoys, the envoy

from Athens, the venerable King Archidamas, the implacable Jingo Stheneläidas; but the words that came from their lips are the words of the historian. He knows in general the kind of sentiments that each one represented, and he makes up their speeches accordingly. No doubt the readers of Thucydides understood how this was done, and nobody was misled by it; but a critical age would not tolerate such a fashion. The critical scholar wants either the real thing or nothing; when inverted commas are used in connection with the first person singular, he wants to see the very words that came from the speaker, even with their faults of grammar or of taste. Half a century ago the letters of George Washington were edited by the late President Sparks of Harvard, who felt himself called upon to amend them. Where the writer said "Old Put," the editor would change it to "General Putnam," and where Washington exclaims that "things are in a devil of a state," he is made to observe that "our affairs have reached a deplorable condition." This sort of editing belongs to the *old* ways of treating history. The spirit of the new ways was long ago expressed by honest Oliver Cromwell, when he said to the artist, "Paint me as I am — mole and all!"

It has become difficult for us, in these days of punctilious antiquarian realism, to understand the tolerance of anachronisms that formerly prevailed in literature and on the stage, when in the tragedies of Corneille and Racine the wrathful Achilles and Agamemnon, king of men, not only reviled each other in the court phrases of Versailles, but strutted about in bag-wigs and lace ruffles, while Klytemnestra lifted

her ample hoop-skirts in a graceful courtesy. In such matters our keener historic sense has become exacting. A few years ago, when I visited one of the Alaska missions, my attention was called to a large picture of the Adoration of the Magi, painted by a young Indian. It was a remarkable piece of work, and had some points of real merit, but it was noticeable that all the faces—those of the Virgin and Child, of St. Joseph and the Wise Men—were Indian faces. This red man's method was the primitive method. The age of Louis XIV. had not quite outgrown it. But the change since then has been like the change from coaches to railways. History is made to serve the arts, and in turn has pressed the arts into her service. Sculptor and architect, painter and poet, must alike delve in the past for principles and for illustrations. We have even known the conscientious poet to set public opinion right on a matter of history. One of the commonplaces of history, one of the things that everybody knows, is that Cotton Mather was one of the chief instigators and promoters of the witchcraft horrors in Salem; yet, like many of the things that everybody knows, it is not true. The notion started in a slanderous publication by one of Mather's enemies, and was repeated parrot-like by one historian after another, including the late George Bancroft, until it occurred to the poet Longfellow to take some of the incidents of the Salem witchcraft as the theme of a tragedy. In order to catch the very spirit of 1692, the poet studied with his customary critical thoroughness the original papers relating to the affair, until he perceived that Cotton Mather's part in it was not an instigating but a restraining part, and that if



his written injunctions had been heeded not one of the nineteen victims could have been sent to the gallows. When the poem was published, exhibiting the great clergyman in this new light, some sage critics shook their heads and muttered, "Poetic license!" But it has been abundantly proved that Longfellow was quite right.

I have said enough about going to original sources. It is time to point out a different sort of contrast between old and new ways of treating history. Let us consider how history began. In primitive times, of which modern savage life is a wayside survival, after a tribe had returned from a successful campaign, there was a grand celebration. Amid feast and hilarity, booty was divided and captives were slaughtered. Then the warriors painted their faces and danced about the fire, while medicine-men chanted the prowess of the victorious chieftain and boasted the number of enemies slain. There were also sacrifices to the tutelar ghost-deities, and homage was paid to their ancestral virtues. In such practices epic poetry and history had their common origin, and it must be said that to this day history retains some of the traces of its savage infancy. With most people it is still little more than a glorified form of ancestor-worship. One sees this not only in the difficulty of arousing general interest in events that have happened at a distance, but also in the absurdly narrow views which different countries or different sections of the same country take with regard to matters of common interest. In reading French historians one perpetually feels the presence of the tacit assumption that divides the human race into Frenchmen and Barbarians; but in this regard



Frenchmen, though perhaps the most hopeless, are by no means the only sinners. Through the literature of all nations runs that same ludicrous assumption that our people are better than other people, and from this it is but a short step to the kindred assumption that the same national acts which are wrongful in other people are meritorious in ourselves. The feelings which underlie these assumptions are simply evanescent forms of the feelings which in a savage state of society make warfare perpetual, and they are in no wise commendable. Their most stupid and contemptible phase is that which prompts the different sections of a common country to twit and flout one another with the various misdeeds of their respective ancestors. Such pettiness of outlook is incompatible with an intelligent conception of the career of mankind. That some people have been more favourably situated than others, that some have accomplished more in sundry directions than others, is not to be denied. The study of such facts and their causes is one of fascinating interest, and forms part of the most important work of the historian; but so long as he allows his views to be coloured by fondness for one people as such, and dislike for another people as such, his conclusions are sure to be warped and to some extent weakened. The late Mr. Freeman was a historian of vast knowledge, wide sympathies, and unusual breadth of view, but he was afflicted by two inveterate prejudices,—one against Frenchmen, the other against the House of Austria,—and the damage thereby caused is flagrant in some parts of his field of work and traceable in many more.

History must not harbour prejudices, because the

spirit proper for history is the spirit proper for science. The two are identical. The word "history" is a Greek word, originally meaning "inquiry." Aristotle named one of his great works "a history concerning animals," whence from Pliny and in modern usage we often hear of "natural history." It is the business of the historian to inquire into the past experience of the human race, in order to arrive at general views that are correct, in which case they will furnish lessons useful for the future. It is a task of exceeding delicacy, and the dispassionate spirit of science is needed for its successful performance. Science does not love or hate its subjects of investigation; the historian must exercise like self-control. I do not mean that he should withhold his moral judgment; he will respect intelligence and bow down to virtue, he will expose stupidity and denounce wickedness, wherever he encounters them, but he will not lose sight of the ultimate aim to detect the conditions under which certain kinds of human actions thrive or fail; and that is a scientific aim.

Yet another difference between old and new methods invites our attention. The old-fashioned history, still retaining the marks of its barbaric origin, dealt with little save kings and battles and court intrigues. It consisted mainly of details concerning persons. Since the middle of the eighteenth century more attention has been paid to the history of commerce and finance, to geographical circumstances, to the social conditions of peoples, to the changes in beliefs, to the progress of literature and art. A modern book which is remarkable for the skill with which it follows all the threads in the story of national progress simultaneously, and in

one vast and superb picture shows each element co-operating with the others, is the well-known "History of the English People" by John Richard Green. Both Green and Freeman were friends of mine, and I am tempted to relate an incident which illustrates their different points of view. Freeman's conception of history was more restricted, though within his narrower sphere he took a vast sweep. Most people remember his definition, "History is past politics and politics are present history." One day he took Green to task in a friendly way: "I say, Johnny, if you'll just leave out all that stuff about art and literature and how people dressed and furnished their houses, your book will be all right; as it is, you are spoiling its unity." Fortunately this advice went unheeded. The poetic quality of Green's genius controlled that immense wealth of material without injuring the unity of the narrative, and gave us a book that represents the highest grade of historical work in our time and is likely to live as a classic.

In the first half of the nineteenth century some confused attempts were made to treat history like a physical science, and trace the destinies of nations to peculiarities in climate and soil, ignoring moral causes. There was also an inclination to underrate the work of great men, and ascribe all results to vaguely conceived general tendencies. Against these views there came a spasmodic reaction which asserted that history is nothing but the biographies of great men. The former view was most conspicuously represented by Buckle, the latter by Carlyle and Froude. Concerning the point at issue between them, it may be said that since general tendencies are manifested only in the thoughts

and actions of men, it is these that the historian must study, and that as causal agencies a Cromwell or a Luther may count for more than a million ordinary men; but after all, our ultimate source of enlightenment still lies in the study of the general conditions under which the activity of our Cromwell or Luther was brought forth. Most minds find pleasure in personal incidents, while a few have the knowledge and the capacity for sustained thinking that are needed for penetrating to the general causes. There is a type of mind that is interested chiefly in what is unusual or catastrophic; but it is a more scientific type that is interested in tracing the silent operation of common and familiar facts. By this latter method physical science has prospered in recent days as never before, and the same has been the case with the study of history.

Allusion has been made to the useful lessons that may be found in the study of the past. In searching for such lessons great care must be taken to avoid the fallacy of reasoning from loose analogies. This common fallacy is injured by the pernicious habit of arguing from words without stopping to consider the things to which the words are applied. For example, many Americans seem to suppose that our government is like that of France because both are called republics, and unlike that of England because the latter is represented by a hereditary sovereign. In point of fact, the government of France is substantially the same, whether it is called an empire or a republic; in neither case do the French people have self-government; the resemblances to the United States are superficial and the differences are fundamental. Whereas,

on the other hand, the people of England govern themselves as effectively as the people of the United States, and the differences are superficial and the resemblances are fundamental. Yet, as a rule, people cannot free themselves from the trammels of names, and any community of ignorant half-breed Indians ruled by an irresponsible despot is thought worthy of our special sympathy if that despot happens to be labelled president rather than king.

A flagrant instance of reasoning from loose analogies was furnished about a century ago by an English member of Parliament, William Mitford, who wrote a history of Greece under the influence of his overmastering dread of parliamentary reform. His first volume appeared in 1784, when the reformers seemed on the eve of the victory which they did not really win till 1832. Mitford wished to show that democracy is always and everywhere an unmitigated evil, and he used the history of Athens to point his moral, although Athenian democracy was not really like anything in the modern world. A more curious distortion of facts than Mitford's "History of Greece" has seldom been put into print.

When Grote, half a century later, wrote his magnificent "History of Greece," he appeared as the champion of Athens. He, too, was a member of Parliament, an advanced free-thinker and democrat. It was as natural for him to love the Athenians as for Mitford to hate them, and possibly his sympathies may once or twice have urged him a little too far. But his mental powers and his scholarship were immeasurably greater than Mitford's, and he did not try to force a lesson from his facts; he tried to understand the people



whom he described. The result was a picture of the old Greek world so faithful and so brilliant that it cannot soon be superseded. A German history of Greece was afterward written by Ernst Curtius, — a charming book, rich in learning and thought. But the experience of the Englishman as the native of a free country gave him an advantage in understanding the Athenians, the lack of which we feel seriously when we read the German work. A similar deficiency, due to similar shortcomings in political training, we find in one of the greatest works of the nineteenth century, Mommsen's "History of Rome."

But while Grote achieved such success in depicting the free world of Hellas, he was less successful when he came to the Macedonian Conquest, and with the close of the generation contemporary with Alexander the Great he seemed to lose his interest in the subject. His history stops at that point with words of farewell that echo the mournful spirit of baffled Demosthenes. The spectacle of free Greece was so beautiful and inspiring that one cannot bear to see it come to an end. Yet the diffusion of Greek culture through the Roman world, from the Euphrates to the shores of Britain, is a theme of no less interest and importance. In many ways the learned and thoughtful books of Mr. Mahaffy illustrate this point. It may suffice here to observe that, without a careful study of the three centuries following Alexander, one cannot hope to understand the circumstances of the greatest event in all history, the spreading of Christianity over the Roman Empire.

We are thus led to notice another important difference between the old and the new ways. The old-

fashioned student of history was apt to confine his attention to the so-called classical period, such as the age of Perikles, or of Augustus, or of Elizabeth, or of Louis XIV. Such a habit is fatal to the acquirement of anything like a true perspective in history. What should we say of the botanist who should confine himself to Jacqueminot roses and neglect what gardeners call weeds? How far would the ornithologist ever get who should study only nightingales and birds of paradise? In truth the dull ages which no Homer has sung nor Tacitus described have sometimes been critical ages for human progress. Such was the eighth century of the Christian era, which witnessed the rise of the Carlovingians; and such again was the eleventh, the time of Hildebrand and William the Norman. This restriction of the view to literary ages has had much to do with the popular misconception of the thousand years that elapsed between the reign of Theodoric the Great and the discovery of America. For many reasons that period may rightly be called the Middle Ages; but the popular mind is apt to lump those ten centuries together, as if they were all alike, and to apply to them the misleading epithet, Dark Ages. A portion of the darkness is in the minds of those who use the epithet. The Germanic reorganization of Europe, and the fearful struggle with Islam, did indeed involve a break with the ancient civilization, but there was no such absolute gulf as that which exists in the popular imagination. The darkest age was perhaps that of the wicked Frankish queens, Brunhild and Fredegonda; but the career of civilization was then far more secure than it had been a thousand years earlier, in the age of Perikles, when all



Europe, except a few Greek cities, was immersed in dense barbarism.

A similar exclusive devotion to literary or classical periods leads us to misjudge certain communities as well as certain ages. Our perspective thus gets warped in space as well as in time. Few persons realize the great importance of the Roman Empire of the East, all the way from Justinian to the iniquitous capture of Constantinople by the French and Venetians in 1204. In these ages Constantinople was the chief centre of culture; through her commercial relations with Genoa, she exercised a civilizing influence over the whole of western Europe, and she was the military bulwark of Christendom first against Saracen, then against Turk, until at last she succumbed in an evil hour which we have not yet ceased to mourn. Largely for want of a period of classical literature the so-called Byzantine Empire has been grievously underrated.<sup>1</sup>

But the worst distortion of perspective in our study of the career of mankind is one of which we have only lately begun to rid ourselves. It is the distortion caused by supercilious neglect of the lower races. In the course of the fifteenth century the expansion of maritime enterprise brought civilized Europeans for the first time into contact with races of queer-looking men with black or red skins, often hideous in feature and uncouth in their customs. They called such people savages, and the name has been loosely applied to a vast number of groups of men in widely different stages of culture, but all alike falling far short of the European level. Such people have no literature, and

<sup>1</sup> In the original manuscript Dr. Fiske makes a marginal annotation — "Also ill feeling of western Europe toward Greek Church."

their customs are often unpleasant; and so they have been unduly despised. Fortunately travellers have given copious descriptions of savage and barbarous tribes, but they have been lazily accepted as freaks or oddities, and it is only lately that they have been subjected to serious study, comparison, and analysis. It is not too much to say that this has wrought a greater change in our conception of human history than all other causes put together. For it has formed the occasion for a vast extension of the comparative method. Early in the present century something like a new Renaissance was begun when Englishmen in India began to study Sanskrit, and were struck with its resemblance to the languages of Europe. The first result of such studies was the beginning of comparative philology in the establishment of the Aryan family of languages; pretty soon there followed the comparative study of myths and folk-tales; and then came comparative jurisprudence, which, for the world of English readers, is chiefly associated with the beautiful writings of Sir Henry Maine. Next it began to appear that many problems which remain insoluble so long as we confine our attention to the Aryan world soon yield up their secret if we extend our comparison so as to include the speech, the beliefs, and the customs of savages. In taking this great step the name of an American investigator, the late Lewis Morgan, with his profound classification of stages of human culture, stands foremost; and the work of our Bureau of Ethnology at Washington, under the masterly direction of Major Powell, is doing more toward a correct interpretation of the beginnings of human society than was ever done

before. It is proved beyond a doubt that the institutions of civilized society are descended from institutions like those now to be observed in savage society. Savages and barbarians are simply races that have remained in phases of culture which more civilized races have outgrown; and hence one helps to explain the other. Certain obscure local institutions, for example, in ancient Greece and Rome, have been made quite intelligible by the study of similar institutions among American Indians. In these ways history, without ceasing to be a study of individuals and nations, has come to be in the broadest sense the study of the growth and decay of institutions.

Thus for a good many reasons we see that the new ways of treating history are better than the old. We are better equipped for getting at the truth, and it is a larger kind of truth when we have got it. Yet the historian is forgetting his highest duty if he allows himself to become unjust to the men of past times. There were giants in former days, and if we can see farther than they, it is because we stand upon their shoulders. Nor will all our boasted science make great historians, in the absence of the native genius. Let us never fail in reverence to the masters of our craft. The world will never know a more delightful narrator than Herodotus, careful and critical as we now know him to be, wide in outlook and keenly inquisitive, with his touches of quaint philosophy and his delicious Ionic diction. Or consider Thucydides, with his mournful story of the war in which the Peloponnesian states combine against Athens, one of the greatest crimes known to history, — somewhat such a crime as war between the United States and Great

Britain would be to-day. In the rugged sentences of Thucydides we are brought face to face with the most powerful intellect except Shakespeare's that ever dealt with historic themes. Thence it is indeed a falling off to the mild, urbane, if you please superficial, Xenophon; but who can weary of that exquisite Attic prose, or read without choking the cry of the Ten Thousand on catching sight of the friendly sea? Then a word must be said of grave and wise Polybius, most trustworthy of guides, and brilliant Tacitus, pithy and pungent, but now and then too fond of pointing a moral and needing at such times to be taken with a grain of salt. The pictures of the ancient world in Plutarch, though not always accurate in detail, have an ethical value that is beyond price. We must not forget Gregory of Tours, the honest, credulous bishop whose uncouth Latin gives such a vivid portrayal of Merovingian times; nor charming Froissart, with his mediæval French, bringing before us a world of belted knights and jewelled dames, where common people have no claim to notice. A century later the statesmanlike Commines and much slandered Machiavelli show us the victory of Reynard over Isegrim, of organizing intelligence over the cruder forces of feudalism, while the saintly Las Casas tells of the discovery of America and the deeds of the Spanish conquerors. In Vico we see a great intellect failing in the premature attempt to make history scientific, and then we pass on to Voltaire, the witchery of whose matchless style in his "*Essai sur les Mœurs*" reveals a grasp of universal history in perspective such as no man before him had attained. Finally, with a grasp scarcely inferior to Voltaire's, the gigantic learning of

Gibbon, aided by marvellous artistic sense in the grouping of huge masses of detail, gives us what is in many ways the greatest book of history that ever was written. It now needs to be supplemented at many points, but it is not easy to look forward to a time when it can be superseded. It is curious to note the contrast between this book and one that used always to be associated with it in men's minds. "The History of England," by David Hume, has lived more than a century, partly because of its fine narrative style, partly because of the absence, until recently, of any better book of convenient size; but it was never in any sense a great history, and it is now worse than worthless to the general reader. The reason for this is its lack of knowledge of the subject with which it deals. It is the superficial and careless work of a man of brilliant genius. In contrast with this the untiring patience of Gibbon, his exhaustless wealth of knowledge, his almost miraculous accuracy, his disinterested calmness of spirit, his profundity of critical discernment, combined with the artistic temperament to produce a work as enduring as the Eternal City itself. And with this example my concluding advice to the student of new methods is, Forget not to profit by the old masters.





II

JOHN MILTON



## II

### JOHN MILTON

To bring a sketch of John Milton within the compass of a single hour seems much like attempting the feat described by Jules Verne; of making the journey around the world in eighty days. In the dimensions of that human personality there is a cosmic vastness which one can no more comprehend in a few general statements than one could sum up in some brief formula the surface of our planet, with all its varied configuration, all its rich and marvellous life. There have been other men, indeed, more multifarious in their worth than Milton, men whose achievements have been more diversified. Doubtless the genius of Michael Angelo was more universal, Shakespeare touched a greater number of springs in the human heart; and such a spectacle as that of Goethe, making profound and startling discoveries in botany and comparative anatomy while busy with the composition of "Faust," we do not find in the life of Milton. A mere catalogue dealing with the Puritan poet and his works would be shorter than many another catalogue. But when we seek words in which to convey a critical estimate of the man and what he did, we find that we have a world upon our hands. Professor Masson, of the University of Edinburgh, has written the "Life of Milton" in six large octavos; he has given as much space to the subject as Gibbon gave to the "Decline and

Fall of the Roman Empire," yet we do not feel that he has treated it at undue length.

The Milton family belonged to the yeomanry of Oxfordshire. They were just such plain, brave, intelligent people as the great body of those who migrated to New England. About five miles from Oxford there lived, in the reign of Elizabeth, one Richard Milton, who was a ranger or keeper of the Forest of Shotover. In 1563 there was born to him a son John, just a few months before the birth of William Shakespeare in the neighbouring town of Stratford-on-Avon. Richard Milton was a stanch Roman Catholic. In due course of time his son John became a student at Oxford, and was converted to Protestantism. One day the father picked up an English Bible in the son's room. High words ensued; the young man, sturdy and defiant, was cast off and disinherited, and so presently made his way to London and set up in business as a scrivener. In that business were combined the occupations of the notary public with some of those of the solicitor. This John Milton not only took affidavits, but drew up contracts and deeds, and probably helped his clients to invest their money. The selling of law books and stationery was also part of the scrivener's business, in which professional man and tradesman were thus quaintly mixed. The scrivener Milton was distinguished for intelligence and integrity; he became wealthy, or at any rate extremely comfortable in circumstances, and he won general respect and confidence. At the age of thirty-seven he married a lady named Sarah Bradshaw. In the simple, cosey fashion of those days, the family lived over the office or shop, which was in Bread Street, Cheapside, with no street

number to mark it, but the sign of an eagle with outstretched wings, the family crest of the Miltons.

It was here, at the Spread Eagle, that the scrivener's eldest son, John Milton, the poet, was born on the 9th of December, 1608. The house, which was afterward burned in the Great Fire of 1666, stood in the very heart of London, which was then a city with scarcely 200,000 inhabitants and had not quite lost the rural look and quality. The house stood not only within the sound of Bow bells, but in the very shadow of the belfry where they were hung, and hard by was the Mermaid Tavern, whither one can fancy that Shakespeare, resorting on his last visit to London in 1614, may well have passed by the scrivener's door and smiled upon the beautiful boy of six with his delicate rosy cheeks and wealth of auburn curls. Throughout life, Milton's personal beauty attracted attention; the great soul was enshrined in a worthy tabernacle. Several portraits of him, painted at different ages, are still preserved. We can imagine the honest pride with which the father took him, when ten years old, to sit to Cornelius Jansen. The charming picture, which has often been engraved, lights up for us the story of the poet's childhood. It shows us a grave but sweet and happy face, of which the prevailing character, as Professor Masson has well said, is "a lovable seriousness." Under it the first engraver inscribed these lines from "Paradise Regained":—

"When I was yet a child, no childish play  
To me was pleasing ; all my mind was set  
Serious to learn and know, and thence to do,  
What might be public good : myself I thought  
Born to that end, born to promote all truth  
And righteous things."

There is no doubt that this consecration of himself to a lofty ideal of life was begun in early childhood. In this earnestness of mood, this clear recognition of the seriousness of life and its duties, Milton was a born Puritan. But along with this general temperament, the lines here quoted tell us of something more. The youthful Milton was conscious, dimly at first but more distinctly with advancing years, of a mission which he was sent into the world to fulfil. An acquaintance of his, John Aubrey, tells us that he had begun to write verses before his tenth year. It seems clear that he was still very young when the vocation of the poet came before his mind as the calling which he should like to adopt, to which he would fain consecrate his life. But the true poet is far more than a builder of rhymes; he is the man who sees the deepest truths that concern humanity, and knows how to proclaim them with power and authority such as no other kind of man save the poet can wield. So the boy Milton felt himself "born to promote all truth and righteous things," and to this end he became eager to learn and know, in order to act for the public good. By his twelfth year the raging thirst for knowledge had so far possessed him that he commonly sat at his books until after midnight.

It was in a refined and pleasant home that this boy grew up. His father was at once indulgent and wise, his mother gentle; there was an older sister and a younger brother; good company came to the house. The scrivener Milton was a musical composer of merit enough to be mentioned in contemporary books alongside of such masters as Tallis and Orlando Gibbons. The house in Bread Street had an organ, upon which



the young Milton learned to play with skill and power. He also played on the bass viol, and to the end of his days his interest in music never flagged. We may suppose that from the father's genius the son inherited that delicate appreciation of vocal sounds which makes his poetry the most melodious ever written in English, — sometimes rivalled, but never excelled, by Shakespeare in his sonnets and in the snatches of song that sparkle in his plays.

In those days, precocious boys were almost always intended by their parents for the Church, and such was the case with Milton. From his twelfth to his sixteenth year he went to the school in St. Paul's churchyard, which the famous reformer Colet had founded a century before. At the same time, he read at home with a tutor, a canny Scotch Presbyterian, named Thomas Young. At the age of sixteen, besides his Greek and Latin, Milton had learned French and Italian thoroughly, and had made a good beginning in Hebrew. Soon after his sixteenth birthday, he entered college, but not at Oxford, where his father had studied. No reason is assigned for sending him to Cambridge, but the reason seems self-evident. The inveterate Toryism of Oxford — if I may call it by the word which came into use a few years later — must have been distasteful to his Puritan family. The eastern counties were becoming more and more a hotbed for free thinking in religion and politics, probably because of their frequent intercourse with the Netherlands. The atmosphere of Cambridge was charged with Puritanism and denial of the divine right of kingship ; one might have seen there many harbingers of the coming storm. Early in 1625 Milton entered Christ's

College, Cambridge, and there he lived for seven years and a half. His study and bedroom, unaltered since his time, are still shown to visitors; and in the beautiful garden — most beautiful, perhaps, of the gardens in that exquisite country town — you may see the mulberry tree, many centuries old, with its decrepit boughs still resting on the wooden props which Milton's loving care placed under them.

Of his life at Cambridge we have not many details. More than once his proud, independent spirit got him into difficulties. There is a story that he was once flogged by one of the tutors, but it is not well supported; he seems, however, to have been at one time punished with what in an American college would be called "suspension." The cause was not neglect of study or serious misbehaviour, but defiant independence. He had none of youth's wild or vicious inclinations; then, as always, his conduct was without spot or flaw. It was part of his lofty conception of the poet's calling that the poet's soul should admit no kind of defilement in thought or deed. No priest or prophet ever more devoutly revered the work for which God had chosen him than this Puritan poet. The feeling of religious consecration and self-devotion finds strong expression in the sonnet written on his reaching the age of twenty-three: —

"How soon hath Time, the subtle thief of youth,  
    Stolen on his wing my three-and-twentieth year!  
    My hasting days fly on with full career,  
But my late spring no bud or blossom sheweth.  
Perhaps my semblance might deceive the truth,  
    That I to manhood am arrived so near,  
    And inward ripeness doth much less appear  
That some more timely-happy spirits endureth.

Yet be it less or more, or soon or slow,  
It shall be still in strictest measure even  
To that same lot, however mean or high,  
Toward which Time leads me, and the will of Heaven ;—  
All is, if I have grace to use it so,  
As ever in my great Taskmaster's eye."

One is reminded by this of Goethe's simile of the star which, without hasting but without resting, fulfils the destiny assigned it. The spirit is that of the old monkish injunction, to study as if for life eternal but to live prepared to die to-morrow, the very spirit of consecration to a lofty purpose.<sup>1</sup> That Milton at the age of twenty-three should have felt any lack of inward ripeness seems odd when we know that his scholarship was already generally recognized as greater than had ever been seen at Cambridge, save perhaps when Erasmus was teaching Greek there. When Milton took his master's degree the next year he was urged to stay and accept a fellowship. But at that time it was necessary for the fellow of a college to be in holy orders, and although Milton's parents had meant that he should be a clergyman, he had by this time discovered that he required more liberty of thought and speech than could be found in the Church. In his own forcible words, "I thought it better to prefer a blameless silence before the sacred office of speaking, bought and begun with servitude and forswearing." So he left Cambridge and went home. For a moment he thought of taking law as a profession, but it was clear that such a course would tend to defeat his cherished purpose of writing a great poem, and the idea was abandoned.

<sup>1</sup> "*Disce ut semper victurus vive, ut cras moriturus,*" of which he has given so admirable a translation, became the motto of Dr. Fiske's life, and was graven above the hearth in his library at "Westgate," in Cambridge.

Milton's father had retired from business and was living in plain rural comfort in the pretty village of Horton, within sight of the towers of Windsor Castle, and about two hours ride on horseback from London. It was near enough to allow going into the city to hear music or to spend an evening at the theatre. In Horton, the young poet lived at his father's house for nearly six delightful years of study and meditation. He pushed on his studies in Hebrew, including Rabbinical literature as well as the Bible; and to all this he added a knowledge of Syriac. With Greek literature his acquaintance was minute and thorough, and he seems to have written Greek fluently. But his mastery of Latin was such as has rarely been equalled. He not only wrote it, whether prose or verse, with the same facility as English, but his command of the language was such as few of the Roman authors themselves had attained. His Latin style has not, indeed, the elegant perfection of Cicero and Virgil; it tolerates, or rather rejoices, in phrases which those writers would have deemed barbarous; but this does not come from carelessness or lack of knowledge, it is done on purpose. Milton was so much at home in Latin that he would play with it just as James Russell Lowell delighted in playing with English. It was none of your dead-and-alive schoolmaster's Latin, but a fresh and flowing diction, full of pith and pungency.

During the quiet years at Horton, the chief studies of Milton were in the history and literature of Italy. Of English and French literature down to his own time, he had compassed pretty much all that was accessible and worth knowing,—a much easier achievement in those days than it would be now,

after these two added centuries of printing. To Greek history, from early times to the fall of Constantinople, he also gave much attention.

It was at Horton that Milton's first great poems were written. More or less meritorious verse in Greek, Latin, and English he had written at Cambridge; and in the Christmas hymn, written in his twenty-first year, —

“It was the winter wild,  
While the heaven-born child  
All meanly wrapped in the rude manger lies,”

there are some stanzas of magnificent promise. But his first important work was “Comus,” a mask performed at Ludlow Castle in 1634. The mask was a kind of dramatic entertainment, in which scenery and gorgeous costumes formed a setting for dialogue alternating with music. It was fashionable in England from the time of Edward III. to the time of Charles I. Some of the finest specimens of the mask were written by Ben Jonson, who was still living in 1634. With further development the mask would probably have become opera, but its career was suddenly cut short by Puritanism. “Comus” seems to have been the last one that was performed. The eminent composer, Henry Lawes, had undertaken to furnish music for a mask; he asked his friend Milton to write the words, and the result was “Comus,” a piece of poetry more exquisite than had ever before been written in England save by Shakespeare. There is an ethereal delicacy about it that reminds one of the quality of mind shown in such plays as the “Tempest” and the “Midsummer Night’s Dream.” The late Mark Patti-



son has observed that "it was a strange caprice of fortune that made the future poet of the Puritan epic the last composer of a Cavalier mask." But in truth, while Milton was a typical Puritan for earnestness and strength of purpose, he was far from sharing the bigoted and narrow whims of Puritanism. He had no sympathy whatever with the spirit that condemned the theatre and tore the organs out of churches and defaced noble works of art and frowned upon the love of beauty as a device of Satan. He was independent even of Puritan fashions, as is shown by his always wearing his long, auburn locks when a cropped head was one of the distinguishing marks of a Puritan. With the same proud independence he approved the drama and kept up his passion for music. In his seriousness there was no sourness. A lover of truth and righteousness, he also worshipped the beautiful. In his mind there was no antagonism between art and religion,—art was part of religion; the artist, like the saint, was inspired by God's grace. Listen to what he says of the power of poetic creation, "This is not to be obtained but by devout prayer to that Eternal Spirit that can enrich with all utterance and knowledge, and sends out His seraphim with the hallowed fire of His altar, to touch and purify the life of whom He pleases." There is the Puritan doctrine of grace applied in a manner which few Puritans would have thought of.

The blithe and sunny temper of Milton is illustrated in the two exquisite little poems with Italian titles he wrote while at Horton,—*"L'Allegro"* or *"The Cheerful Man,"* and *"Il Penseroso"* or *"The Thoughtful Man."* In them the delicious life he was



living in the soft English country finds expression. Nothing more beautiful has come from human pen. In the first one, the poet addresses the fair goddess of Mirth, "so buxom, blithe, and debonair." In her company he fain would dwell,

"In unproved pleasures free ;  
To hear the lark begin his flight,  
And singing startle the dull night,  
From his watch-tower in the skies,  
Till the dappled dawn doth rise.

\* \* \* \*

While the cock with lively din  
Scatters the rear of darkness thin,  
And to the stack, or the barn door,  
Stoutly struts his 'dames before."

In the bright morning thus ushered in, our poet would go forth on his walk,

"By hedge row elms on hillocks green,

\* \* \* \*

While the ploughman near at hand  
Whistles o'er the furrowed land,  
And the milkmaid singeth blithe,  
And the mower whets his scythe,  
And every shepherd tells his tale  
Under the hawthorn in the dale."

As he goes on his way a series of exquisite, home-like landscape pictures, such as can be seen nowhere else in such perfection as in England, greets his eye.

"Russet lawns and fallows gray,  
Where the nibbling flocks do stray,  
Mountains on whose barren breast  
The labouring clouds do often rest ;  
Meadows trim with daisies pied,  
Shallow brooks and rivers wide.

Towers and battlements it sees,  
 Bosomed high in tufted trees.

\* \* \* \*

Hard by a cottage chimney smokes  
 From betwixt two aged oaks,  
 Where Corydon and Thyrsis met  
 Are at their savoury dinner set  
 Of herbs and other country messes  
 Which the neat-handed Phillis dresses."

After the day and evening, with their innocent country pleasures, have received due mention, the occasional visit to London is not forgotten.

"Then to the well-trod stage anon,  
 If Jonson's learned sock be on,  
 Or sweetest Shakespeare, fancy's child,  
 Warble his native woodnotes wild ;  
 And ever against eating cares  
 Lap me in soft Lydian airs,  
 Married to immortal verse. . . ."

And so on to the final invocation.

"These delights, if thou canst give,  
 Mirth, with thee I mean to live."

Nothing could be further from the conventional Puritanism, as remembered in New England, than the mood in which these verses were conceived. In the companion address to Melancholy, wherein Milton's deeper soul finds expression, we have all the earnestness of the Puritan, without the slightest attempt to suppress or hide the worship of the beautiful. From the opening line : —

"Hence, vain deluding joys,"

we seem to hear a hurried sweep of stringed instruments, till all at once enters the solemn note of the organ:—

“Come pensive Nun, devout and pure,  
Sober, steadfast, and demure,  
All in a robe of darkest grain,  
Flowing with majestic train.”

The passage is too long for quotation; we must pass to the evening picture,

“Where glowing embers through the room  
Teach light to counterfeit a gloom,  
Far from all resort of mirth,  
Save the cricket on the hearth,  
Or the bellman’s drowsy charm,  
To bless the doors from nightly harm.”

Then in silent meditation the scholar recalls the teachings of Plato, and seeks to imagine what may betide man’s immortal soul when all that is earthly shall have passed away. He peers into the secrets of science, but is not forgetful of the varied drama of human life.

“Some time let gorgeous Tragedy  
In sceptred pall come sweeping by.”

With epic and legend and all the storied lore of the Middle Ages and the Orient, the night passes and the morning comes with soft showers.

“And when the sun begins to fling  
His flaring beams, me Goddess bring  
To arched walks of twilight groves,

\* \* \* \*

Where the rude axe with heavied stroke  
Was never heard the nymphs to daunt,  
Or fright them from their hallowed haunt.  
There in close covert by some brook,  
Where no profaner eye may look,  
Hide me from Day's garish eye,  
While the bee with honeyed thigh,  
That at her flowery work doth sing,  
And the waters murmuring  
With such consort as they keep,  
Entice the dewy-feathered sleep."

Best known of all the passages in this pair of poems is that in which the poet repairs from the brookside to the studious cloister, with reminiscences of Cambridge and that glorious chapel with its "high embowed roof" and "storied windows," its "pealing organs" and "full-voiced choir," whence the thought is carried on to the hermitage with its mossy cell, where the story ends as it started with the delights of science:—

"Where I may sit and rightly spell  
Of every star that heaven doth shew,  
And every herb that sips the dew ;  
Till old experience do attain  
To something like poetic strain.  
These pleasures, Melancholy, give,  
And I with thee will choose to live."

These twin poems belong to the class of pastorals such as were written by Theocritus and Virgil. A third poem, of similar construction, written at Horton in 1637, has ever since been recognized as the most perfect specimen in existence of that kind of poetry. The framework of "Lycidas" is purely conventional; no one but a scholar steeped to the marrow of his bones

in ancient literature could have worked under such conditions without losing something of the freedom and freshness of his thought. The pastoral form was admirably adapted to Milton's purpose; in that completely artificial and impossible world of shepherds and shepherdesses, nymphs and fauns, it was easy to keep the utterance of strong emotion subservient to the supreme artistic end of beauty for its own sake. Things could be said, too, which, if explicitly said of certain persons living in England in 1637, would not be endured. The occasion of the poem was the death of Edward King, a young clergyman who had been Milton's friend and fellow-student at Cambridge. Mr. King was drowned in a shipwreck on the Irish Sea, in crossing from Chester to Dublin; and his sorrowing friends in Cambridge made up an album of thirty-six original poems in Greek, Latin, and English, to be printed as a memorial volume. Most of the poems were of the crude, trashy sort usually found in such collections. One of them exclaims:—

“To drown this little world ! Could God forget  
His covenant which in the clouds he set?  
Where was the bow?—but back, my Muse, from hence,  
’Tis not for thee to question Providence,” etc.

Another says:—

“Religion was but the position  
Of his own judgment: Truth to him alone  
Stood naked; he strung the Art's chain and knit the ends,  
And made divine and human learning friends,” etc.

A third says:—

“Weep forth your tears, then; pour out all your tide;  
All waters are pernicious since King died.”

Another, with somewhat more poetic touch, refers to sunset : —

“So did thy light, fair soul, itself withdraw  
To no dark tomb by nature’s common law,  
But set in waves.”

After the rabble of versifiers let us now hear the poet. We may observe that the impersonation of Mr. King as the shepherd, Lycidas, while suggested by Greek conventional forms, is in fortunate harmony with the familiar Biblical comparison of the clergyman to the shepherd watching over his flock. How noble is the music of the well-known opening lines : —

“Yet once more, O ye laurels, and once more  
Ye myrtles brown, with ivy never sere,  
I come to pluck your berries harsh and crude,  
And with forced fingers rude  
Shatter your leaves before the mellowing year.”

The sad occasion is the death of young Lycidas, the poet’s fellow-swain : —

“For we were nurst upon the selfsame hill,  
Fed the same flock by fountain, shade, and rill.  
Together, both, ere the high lawns appeared,  
Under the opening eyelids of the morn,  
We drove afield,”

and so proceeds the charming description until the first change of theme : —

“But O the heavy change, now thou art gone,  
Now thou art gone and never must return !  
Thee, shepherd, thee the woods and desert caves,  
With wild thyme and the gadding vine o’ergrown,  
And all the echoes mourn.



The willows and the hazel copses green  
Shall now no more be seen  
Fanning their joyous leaves to thy soft lays.  
As killing as the canker to the rose,  
Or taint-worm to the weanling herds that graze,  
Or frost to flowers that their gay wardrobe wear,  
When first the white thorn blows,  
Such, Lycidas, thy loss to shepherd's ear."

There follow the invocation to the nymphs, the sublime passage on Fame, "that last infirmity of noble minds," and then the shadow procession of figures that come as mourners, — the herald of Neptune, the tutelar deity of the river Cam, and lastly "the pilot of the Galilean lake," St. Peter with his massy keys, who,

" . . . shook his mitred locks, and stern bespake : —  
How well could I have spared for thee, young swain,  
Enough of such as for their bellies' sake  
Creep and intrude and climb into the fold ! "

In the terrible invective thus introduced we read the doom of Archbishop Laud and his policy, until, in the concluding lines, which have greatly puzzled commentators, we seem to see the herdsman with his black mask and hear the dreadful thud of the two-handed broadaxe. In the unreal atmosphere of the pastoral eclogue, such denunciation might be indulged, even in an age when men were sent to jail for their printed words.

From this furnace blast of indignation the change is magical to the wondrously beautiful call for the flowers : —

"Bring the rathe primrose that forsaken dies,  
The tufted crow-toe, and pale jessamine,

The white pink and the pansy freaked with jet,  
The glowing violet,  
The musk rose and the well-attired woodbine,  
With cowslips wan that hang the pensive head,  
And every flower that sad embroidery wears :  
Bid amaranthus all his beauty shed,  
And daffodillies fill their cups with tears,  
To strew the laureate hearse where Lycid lies."

Soon after this invocation, which has in it nothing to which an ancient Greek like Theocritus might not have responded with full sympathy, the mood once more changes, and the triumphant hope of the Christian finds voice in the following sublime passage. We shall encounter in the course of it a word of which the meaning has utterly changed in the last two centuries; Milton says "unexpressive" where we should say "inexpressible" or "beyond expression."

"Weep no more, woful shepherds, weep no more,  
For Lycidas, your sorrow, is not dead,  
Sunk though he be beneath the watery floor.  
So sinks the day-star in the ocean bed,  
And yet anon repairs his drooping head,  
And tricks his beams, and with new-spangled ore,  
Flames in the forehead of the morning sky ;  
So Lycidas, sunk low but mounted high,  
Through the dear might of Him that walked the waves,  
Where, other groves and other streams along,  
With nectar pure his oozy locks he laves,  
And hears the unexpressive nuptial song  
In the blest Kingdoms meek of joy and love.  
There entertain him all the saints above,  
In solemn troops and sweet societies,  
That sing and singing in their glory move,  
And wipe the tears forever from his eyes."

From this magnificent organ peal of triumph, the very next line suddenly changes to a thought that is purely

and emphatically pagan; yet so consummate is the skill with which the varying modes of the poem have been marshalled that there is nothing abrupt or shocking in the change, but our minds follow in entire acquiescence:—

“Now, Lycidas, the shepherds weep no more;  
Henceforth thou art the genius of the shore  
In thy large recompense, and shalt be good  
To all that wander in that perilous flood.”

The next line shows that this change from the Christian to the pagan mood was needed in order to introduce properly the exquisite scene that concludes the poem:—

“Thus sang the uncouth swain to the oaks and rills,  
While the still morn went out with sandals gray,  
He touched the tender stops of various quills,  
With eager thought warbling his Doric lay:  
And now the sun had stretched out all the hills,  
And now was dropt into the western bay.  
At last he rose, and twitched his mantle blue,  
To-morrow to fresh woods and pastures new.”

It was more than twenty years before the promise of the last line was fulfilled. Not until 1658 did Milton turn to fresh woods and pastures new, when he began to work steadily at “Paradise Lost.” In that long interval he wrote no poetry save a few sonnets and an occasional psalm. In the complete edition of Milton’s works, the best edition, published by Pickering, in 1851, the poems are all contained in two volumes, while the prose works fill six volumes. Let us see how so many works came to be written in prose.

In 1638, still pursuing his studies toward the writing of a great poem, Milton started for a journey on

the Continent. He was now in his thirtieth year, and apparently had never earned a penny. By the few people of discernment he was already recognized as one of the foremost scholars in Europe and a poet of the rarest sort. His broad-minded father approved his plans, and cheerfully incurred the expense of this journey, which might last several years, at an average yearly cost of what in modern money might be called \$1000. Milton's fifteen months upon the Continent were chiefly spent in Italy, where he was everywhere received with distinguished respect and courtesy. The incident which made the deepest impression upon him was a visit to the aged and blind Galileo at his villa near Florence. In "Paradise Lost" there are two allusions to the great astronomer, one in Book V. 262:—

"As when by night the glass  
Of Galileo . . . observes  
Imagined lands and regions in the moon ;"

the other in Book I. 287:—

"Like the moon, whose orb  
Through optic glass the Tuscan artist views  
At evening from the top of Fesole,  
Or in Valdorno, to descry new lands,  
Rivers and mountains in her spotty globe."

While in Italy, Milton wrote several charming sonnets in Italian, all addressed to a lady, perhaps one and the same lady, the object of some passing fancy. At Naples he was entertained by the Marquis Manso, who had formerly given shelter to the poet Tasso, and talked much to Milton about him. There he received news from England which led him to abandon his in-

tention of visiting Greece, and turn homeward. The day of reckoning, which he had foretold in "Lycidas," was at hand. Civil war was coming, and he felt that his country needed him. The date of his return home is fixed by that of his halt at Geneva. An Italian nobleman, driven from home for heresy, was living in the Swiss city, and the ladies of his family kept an album of autographs, in which, on June 10, 1639, Milton wrote his name with the sentiment from "Comus":

"If Virtue feeble were,  
Heaven itself would stoop to her."

In recent times this album came into the possession of Charles Sumner, and it may now be seen at Harvard College Library. It contains also the autograph of Thomas Wentworth, Earl of Strafford.

The mention of this name brings us to the work which began to absorb Milton's time and strength soon after his return to England. We have not time enough for many details of it, nor is it worth our while to follow the poet in his various changes of domicile. The days in the earthly paradise of Horton were over, and he was to dwell henceforth in London, and fight for his ideal of liberty and good government. Soon after the opening of the Long Parliament, his interest in Church reforms led him to begin writing those remarkable political pamphlets in which he did such valiant service to the Puritan party. In the first series of such pamphlets, published in 1641, he attacked what he called "Prelacy," or the undue authority of priests and bishops. Opposed to the tyrannical policy of Archbishop Laud were two parties, one of moderate reformers, the other of Root-and-Branch

men, as they were called, men who would have transformed the Episcopal Church into a Presbyterian. Many of these soon passed on farther, and became Congregationalists or Independents. It was not doctrinal questions that divided parties, it was not an affair of theology, but of ecclesiastical politics; republicanism was opposed to monarchy, alike in Church and in State; Milton was from the first moment a Root-and-Branch man, his views were set forth with keen logic, invincible learning, and impassioned eloquence; his pamphlets were read far and wide; he became a marked man, and the object of savage attacks.

Curiously enough, the next series of Milton's pamphlets related to the subject of divorce, and were suggested by domestic difficulties of his own. A few miles from Oxford there lived one Richard Powell, a gentleman of good family and one of the county magistrates, a High Churchman withal and a stanch Cavalier. He had a large family of children and kept open house, and thither the Puritan poet turned his steps in May, 1643. Whether he went to talk about a debt of £500, which Mr. Powell had owed his father for sixteen years, or what other reason might have drawn him to that nest of royalists, does not appear. But when he returned to London in June, strange to tell, it was with one of the daughters, Mary Powell, as his bride. She was only seventeen, and as light-headed as Dora Copperfield. There was a brief frolic of cousins and bridesmaids, and then, when all had gone and the young girl was left alone in the society of this mighty thinker and scholar, more than twice her age, the sombre colour of such life soon came to



be more than she could endure, and in August she begged leave to go back to mamma and stay till the end of September. The leave was kindly granted, but when the time came she did not return. Milton sent letter after letter, but there was no answer. After some weeks he sent a messenger, who was dismissed with rude words.

Practically this might be interpreted as desertion, and in many places to-day would be judged fit ground for divorce. It was not so in England in Milton's time, and it led him to publish pamphlets advocating more freedom of divorce than then existed. He made no mention of his own trouble, but to us who read the knowledge of it lights up what he says. Probably he would have made efforts to obtain a divorce, but the lapse of two years wrought a change. In June, 1645, the battle of Naseby overthrew the king's party, and among other consequences the home of the Powells was seized and the family turned out of doors. Milton, too, became all at once a man of power, whose favour was worth seeking. Some friends conspired together and hid poor little Mary in a house in London, whither Milton was known to be coming at a certain hour. At the sound of his voice in the next room she rushed in upon him, threw herself at his feet, and begged to be forgiven. It was all her mother's fault, she said. The poet's great heart asked for no explanation; it was enough for her to come back now, the past need never be mentioned. To crown his generosity he even took that froward mother-in-law into his house, and thenceforth had pretty much the whole Powell family on his hands for some years. In 1652 Mary Milton died, leaving three daughters, who all lived to

grow up. From his return to England until 1646 Milton had earned money by teaching private pupils; in 1646 the death of his father, whom he tenderly loved, left him a comfortable fortune.

In 1649, after the execution of the king, Milton accepted the post of Latin Secretary to the government of the Commonwealth, and in that position he remained until after the death of Cromwell. His duties were chiefly translating despatches and writing Latin letters, but he was incidentally called upon for much more than this. A royalist book appeared, entitled "Eikon Basilike," or the "Royal Image"; it purported to have been written by the late king, and its object was to stimulate the sentiment which had been shocked by his execution. In its pages Charles I. appears as a saint and martyr, and some of its tearful readers blasphemously likened him to Jesus Christ. The book went through forty-seven editions. It was written by a Dr. Gauden, whom Charles II. afterward rewarded with a bishopric; but everybody, save the half-dozen who knew the secret, believed it to be the work of Charles I. So thought Milton himself when he demolished it in his pamphlet entitled "Eikonoklastes," or the "Image Breaker," the tone of which may be inferred from a motto on the title-page, "As a roaring lion and a ranging bear, so is a wicked ruler over the poor people" (Prov. xxviii. 15).

Dr. Gauden's book, being in English, could not reach many readers on the Continent, and young Charles, who was then living in Holland, intrusted the defence of his father to the celebrated Salmasius, professor at Leyden, generally regarded as the best Latinist in Europe. The book of Salmasius, called

a "Defence of the King," was answered by Milton's Latin treatise, called a "Defence of the English People," which was probably read by every educated man and woman in every corner of Europe. It was a defence of the people for executing their king for treason. The question is one on which conflicting views are still maintained; but the number of those who would hold the king guiltless and call him a martyr has greatly diminished and is still diminishing, since we know that he was capable of allying himself with any party whatever for the sake of his personal ends. In these days we find no difficulty in realizing that a king who uses military force to overthrow the constitutional liberties of the people is guilty of treason and amenable to its consequences. The chief criticism now brought against the execution of Charles I. is that it instantly gave his son a claim to the throne and thus created further disturbance. Cromwell and his party were not ignorant of this danger, but they had to choose between it and the other danger of making further compacts with a king upon whose plighted word no man could for a moment rely. They believed that the latter danger was the greater, and they slew the king, not in vindictiveness, but as a measure of public safety. In Milton's book, however, we catch yet another note, a stern and grim one: let it be a warning to tyrants all over the world. One can fancy the shiver with which royalists everywhere must have read such startling doctrines.

Milton's love and admiration for the mighty Oliver were never shaken. The two men were much alike for downright honesty and unsullied patriotism, also for breadth of mind and disdain of petty considera-

tions. Their ideas of toleration and absolute freedom were immeasurably above the level of contemporary Puritan opinion. The greatest of Milton's prose works is his "Areopagitica," a defence of freedom of speech and of the press. It is one of the immortal glories of English literature.

In leaving with this scanty mention the subject of Milton's prose writings, a word must be said of his style. It is the prose of a poet, impassioned and gorgeous, often stiff and heavy with ornament, like cloth of gold. In his time the virtue of conciseness had not been learned. Milton's sentences are apt to be so long and cumbrous as to tax the attention. The command of words is well-nigh unequalled. Urbanity is often conspicuously absent. It was a great crisis of humanity in which the combatants paid small heed to politeness. Epithets were hurled at Milton like showers of barbed arrows, and his retorts were quick and deadly. Stateliness never deserted him, but, as with George Washington, the white heat of his wrath was such as to make strong men tremble. Pattison somewhere says that in his passionate eloquence the English and Latin sentences creak like the timbers of a ship in a storm.

At that time Milton wrote no poetry save now and then some grand sonnets, among which those of Vane and Cromwell, and on the Massacre of Piedmont, are among the finest. The year 1658, his fiftieth year, was a sad one in the poet's life. His second wife, to whom he had been married little more than a year, suddenly died. Soon afterward died Cromwell, and with him Milton's dreams for the immediate future of England. For a long time Milton's sight had been

defective. Blindness had come on in his forty-fourth year, and it was now confessed to be incurable. The appearance of his eyes had not changed, but all sight was gone. He was then beginning to work steadily upon "Paradise Lost."

In two years more came Charles II., and then the headsman's axe was busy. Milton had to hide for his life, but was arrested and kept for several weeks in prison. While there, he could hear the dismal story of friends and companions beheaded and quartered. In that cruel time how did the man escape who had been the mouthpiece of the rebel government? When even the lifeless body of Cromwell was taken from the grave and hung on the gallows at Tyburn, what mercy could be hoped for the man who defended the regicides before all Europe? Professor Masson tells in detail how skilfully the affair was managed, when the least slip would have sent Milton to the scaffold. My own impression is that Clarendon, himself a scholar and historian, could not quite bear to see England's greatest scholar put to a shocking death. But if Milton had not been blind and helpless, I doubt if anything would have saved him from the fate of Sir Henry Vane.

After his release Milton lived the remaining fourteen years of his life in London. His third wife, to whom he was married in 1663, survived him for many years. Their life seems to have been happy. The blind man needed constant help in his literary work. Sometimes young men would gladly come and serve as readers and scribes for the sake of his society and talk; sometimes his grown-up daughters were pressed into the work. The eldest went scot-free because she stammered; but Mary and Dorothy were taught the Greek



and Hebrew letters, and had to read aloud by the hour from books of which they understood not a word. Dorothy always spoke of him with warm affection, but Mary was once heard to wish he was dead.

The Puritan poet felt that he had fallen on evil days. He could not see, as we do, that the good in Cromwell's work was really permanent, and that the impulse given by Puritanism was never to die. In the vile reign of Charles II., it must have seemed as if all virtue were dethroned and the sons of Belial let loose upon the earth. There is a tone of sadness, though not of sourness, about Milton's last years. He was never sullen or fretful. Macaulay is right in speaking of his "majestic patience." But I do not see what Macaulay could have been thinking of when he wrote of Milton as "retiring to his hovel to die." He had lost heavily by investing money in Commonwealth securities, which the Stuart government naturally refused to redeem. His condition thenceforth, says Masson, was not one of poverty but of "frugal gentility." The house in which he lived for twelve years and in which he died was by no means a hovel, and on the income from his property, such as it was, he maintained his family. Part of the furniture of the house was a good organ, and on it the blind man would play by the hour together, while the verses of "Paradise Lost" were taking shape in his mind. That great poem, with its successors, "Paradise Regained" and "Samson Agonistes," were written in that house; and thither came visitors from all parts of Europe, as to a sacred shrine. He who had so long been known as scholar and charming poet lived long enough to find men ranking him among the foremost poets of all time. His latter days were molested by



gout, which at length proved fatal. On a Sunday night in November, 1674, he passed away so quietly that his friends in the room did not know when he died.

"Paradise Lost," like Dante's great poem, the only one with which it can be compared, was the outcome of many years of meditation. As a young man Milton thought of writing an epic poem, and he took much time in selecting a subject. For a while the legends of King Arthur attracted him, as they have fascinated Tennyson and so many other poets. In the course of his studies of early British history and legend, he was led to write a "History of England," to the year 1066, in one volume. After a while he abandoned this idea. The subject of an epic poem must be one of wide interest. Homer and Virgil dealt with the legendary beginnings of national history. If a national subject, like the Arthur legends, were not adopted, something of equal or wider interest must be preferred; and the choice of the Puritan poet naturally fell upon the story of the "Creation and Fall of Man." The range of such a subject was limited only by that of the poet's own vast stores of knowledge. No theme could be loftier, none could afford greater scope for gorgeous description, none could sound the depths of human experience more deeply, none could appeal more directly to the common intelligence of all readers in Christendom. Of all these advantages Milton made the most, and "Paradise Lost" has been the epic of the Christian world, the household book in many a family and many a land where Puritanism has not otherwise been honoured. As Huxley once remarked, the popular theory of creation, which Lyell and Darwin

overthrew, was founded more upon "Paradise Lost" than upon the Bible.

There is a tradition that Milton preferred his "Paradise Regained" to "Paradise Lost." The poem is much less generally read. Its main theme is the temptation of Christ in the wilderness, and it affords no such scope for picturesqueness as its predecessor. Its greatness consists in the sustained loftiness of the thought and the organ-like music of the verse. There is a Greek severity and simplicity about it, as also in the drama of the blind Samson, the last mighty work of the Puritan poet.

A treatise of Milton's on Christian doctrine, which did not get published till 1825, confirmed the suspicion which some shrewd readers of "Paradise Lost" had entertained, that the poet's own theology, like that of Locke and Newton, was Unitarian. In this, as in some other ways, he was far from being in touch with the Puritans of his time.

In the spiritual life of modern times there have been two great uplifting tendencies, one derived from the Bible, the other from the study of Greek. The former tendency produced the Protestant Reformation, the latter produced what we call the Renaissance or New Birth of art and science. The spirit of the Reformation animated the Puritans as a class. But Milton was as much a child of the Renaissance as of the Reformation; there was in him as much of the Greek as of the Hebrew. The limits of Puritanism were too narrow for him.

By common consent of educated mankind three poets — Homer, Dante, and Shakespeare — stand above all others. For the fourth place there are com-

petitors: two Greeks, Æschylus and Sophocles; two Romans, Lucretius and Virgil; one German, Goethe. In this high company belongs John Milton, and there are many who would rank him first after the unequalled three.



III

THE FALL OF NEW FRANCE





### III

#### THE FALL OF NEW FRANCE

To any one looking superficially at a map of North America in the year 1755, it might well have seemed that, of the three great nations which had competed for the possession of the continent, the foremost position had been firmly secured by France. Certainly in geographical extent the French domain held the first place. From the St. Lawrence to the Great Lakes, and northward to Hudson Bay, stretched the French province of Canada. From Lake Champlain slanting through central New York to where Pittsburg now stands, then following the Alleghanies down to eastern Tennessee, and slanting again in a somewhat arbitrary line to Mobile Bay, ran the eastern boundary of French Louisiana. The western limits of this huge province were ill defined, but they extended in theory to the sources of the Missouri; and in a north and south line Louisiana comprehended everything from Lake Superior to the Gulf of Mexico. Nor was the control of France over this territory merely nominal, at least so far as the portion east of the Mississippi is concerned. Though the settlements of the French were but few and far between, they were placed with admirable skill, both for commercial and for strategic purposes. Each settlement, besides forming the nucleus of a lucrative trade, was a strong military centre from which the allegiance of surrounding Indian tribes might

be enforced, and at that time the power of the Indians had not yet ceased to be formidable.

In contrast with this immense domain, the strip of English settlements along the Atlantic coast would have seemed quite narrow and insignificant. In New York the frontier was at Johnson Hall, not far from Schenectady; in Pennsylvania it was at Carlisle; farther south the advance from the coast toward the interior had been even less considerable. Moreover, as far as military purposes were concerned, these colonies would seem to have been as badly organized as possible. Divided into thirteen distinct and independent governments, owning a varying and ill-defined allegiance to the British crown, it was next to impossible to secure concerted military action among them. Even in any single colony the raising of troops required so much discussion in the legislature, and so much wrangling over local or sectarian interests, that the assailant was as likely as not to have delivered his blow and got off scot-free before any force was in readiness to thwart or punish him. Besides this, the English colonists were preëminently a peace-loving people, occupied almost entirely with their own domestic affairs; they had as little as possible to do with the Indians, and for the present, at least, had no far-reaching designs upon the interior of the continent: whereas the French, on the other hand, had a perfectly well-defined military policy, and bent all their energies toward maintaining and consolidating the supremacy over the country which they seemed already to have acquired.

Nevertheless, within eight years from the time we have taken for our survey, the French did not possess

a single rood of land in the whole of North America; and except for a few months at the beginning of the nineteenth century, they have never since held any territory here. Moreover, the fall of the French power was at once admitted to be as irretrievable as it was sudden; and since the first fatal catastrophe it has never shown even so much vitality as would have been implied in a serious attempt to recover its lost prestige. The causes of this striking phenomenon are worthy of consideration.

It has often been observed that of all the modern nations which have sought to reproduce and perpetuate their social and political institutions by colonizing the savage regions of the earth, England is the only one which has achieved signal and lasting success. For this remarkable fact various causes may be assigned; but I think we shall find the principal cause to lie in the circumstance that in England alone, among the great European nations, both individual liberty and local self-government have always been preserved; whereas elsewhere—and notably in the France of the Old Régime, with which our comparison is here chiefly concerned—these indispensable elements of national vitality had been, by the seventeenth century, almost completely lost. To understand this point fully, we must go back far into the past, and inquire for a moment into the origin of despotic government.

The great problem of civilization is how to secure sufficient uniformity of belief and action among men without going so far as to destroy variety of belief and action. A world peopled with savages and barbarians like ancient North America is incapable of much

progress, because it is impossible to secure concerted action on a large scale, and so the powers of men are frittered away in labours which tend toward no common result. The initial difficulty in civilizing a savage world is to get a large number of its savages to work together, for generation after generation, in accordance with some general system, for the subjugation of surrounding savages and the establishment of a permanent community. Unless some such long-enduring concert of action can be secured, a settled form of civilization cannot be attained; but the history of such a country—as in the case of ancient North America—will be an endless series of trivial and useless wars. The nations which in early times have become civilized and peaceful have become so through the military superiority which the power of permanently concerted action entails; but this great advantage has generally been attended by a disadvantage. In most of these early civilized nations the forces which tend to make the whole community think and act alike have been so far encouraged that the result has been absolute despotism. Not political and ecclesiastical despotism simply, but underlying these a social despotism which in course of time moulds all the members of the community upon the same model, so that their characters become monotonously alike. The chief types of this kind of civilization are China and ancient Egypt, but all the civilized nations of Asia have been characterized by this sort of despotism. The result, of course, is immobility. When the whole community has come to think and feel and behave in the same way, every expression of dissent, every attempt at innovation, is at once crushed

out; or, rather, such uniformity of belief and behaviour is attained only after all dissent and innovation have been crushed out; and of course in such a community no further progress is possible.

If our principal subject were the philosophy of European history, it would be interesting and profitable to inquire into the circumstances which have enabled the nations of Europe to get over the initial difficulty of civilization and secure the benefits of concerted action without going so far as to crush out variation in belief and conduct. As it is, we must content ourselves with observing that in this sort of compromise has consisted the peculiar progressiveness of European civilization. The different nations of Europe have solved the problem with very different degrees of success, — England and Spain affording the two extreme instances, — but none have quite failed in it like the nations of Asia. There have been despotisms in Europe, but nothing like the despotism of Assyria or Persia. The papacy never quite became a caliphate, though some of the popes may have done their best to make it so. Neither Philip II. nor Louis XIV. was quite a sultan, however it might have tickled their fancy to be thought so.

Nevertheless, the tendency toward Asiatic despotism has asserted itself very strongly at various epochs of European history, usually, perhaps, as the result of prolonged military pressure from without. The tendency increased quite steadily in the Roman Empire from the time of the earliest Germanic invasions until the culmination of the Byzantine era; and the traditions of this despotism were inherited by the Roman Church. In Germany, the operation of the tendency



has been delayed in great part by the same causes which have retarded the unification of the country. In Spain, it had proceeded so far in the sixteenth century as to produce a national torpor, from which the Spaniards have not yet succeeded in arousing themselves. In France, a somewhat similar process went on until, in the eighteenth century, it was checked by the influx of English ideas, which prepared the way for the great Revolution. In England, the tendency toward absolutism was always much weaker than anywhere else, but it was strong enough in the seventeenth century to bring about the migration of Puritans to America, and afterward the great Rebellion, and finally the Revolution of 1688. In these and other instances, however, where it has asserted itself in England, the tendency has been so weak as to be promptly checked. There has never been a time in English history when free thinking on political and religious subjects has been quite suppressed. Of all the great European nations, England alone has succeeded in reaching a high stage of civilization without seriously impairing the political freedom which was once the common possession of the Aryan people by whom Europe was last settled.

The consequences of this have been very great. After the initial difficulties of civilization have once been clearly surmounted, there can be no question that diversity of opinion and variety of character are of the greatest importance for the development of a rich and powerful national life. Other things equal, the foremost place in civilization must inevitably be seized and maintained by the nation which most sedulously cherishes and encourages variety. Such a nation will



be more inventive than others, more prompt to meet sudden emergencies, more buoyant in recovering from calamity; its people will be more easily adaptable to all sorts of climates and situations, more ready to engage in all kinds of activity, more fertile in expedients, and more self-reliant in character. The nation, on the other hand, which systematically seeks to enforce uniformity of disposition among its members—which kills out all nonconformists or drives them beyond its borders—is sure, in proportion to its success, to sink into an inferior position in the world. The establishment of the Inquisition in Spain and the expulsion of the Moriscoes were the two greatest calamities which any nation ever voluntarily inflicted upon itself. The evil wrought by the violent expulsion of the Moriscoes, involving as it did the sudden downfall of several of the principal industries of the country, is plain enough to every student of history. But the deadly Inquisition, working quietly and steadily year after year while fourteen generations lived and died, unquestionably wrought still greater evil. The Inquisition was simply a great machine for winnowing out and destroying all such individuals as surpassed the average of the nation in quickness of wit and in strength of character, so far as to entertain opinions of their own and to be bold enough to declare those opinions. The machine worked with such terrible efficiency that it was next to impossible for such people to escape it. They were strangled and burned by tens of thousands; and as the inevitable result, the average character of the Spanish people has been lowered. The brightest and boldest have been cut off, while the dullest and weakest have been spared

to propagate the race; and accordingly the Spaniard of the nineteenth century is, as compared with his contemporaries, a less intelligent and less enterprising person than the Spaniard of the sixteenth century. In the march of progress this people has fallen behind all the other peoples of Europe, and it is very doubtful whether the damage thus done can ever be repaired. For the competition among nations is so constant and so keen, that when a people has once clearly and unmistakably lost its hold upon the foremost position, it is not very likely to regain it. It is so in the struggle for existence that goes on perpetually between species of plants and brute animals. It is equally so in the case of races of men, and history abounds with examples of it.

In similar wise, by his stupid persecution of the Huguenots, Louis XIV. simply robbed France of a rich and important element in its national life, and what France thus irreparably lost was gained by the Protestant countries of Europe and by the English colonies in America. To Massachusetts, to New York, and to South Carolina, the Huguenot settlers, being picked men, added a strength out of all proportion to their mere numbers, and to England and Germany they did likewise. During the reign of Louis XIV. more than a million Huguenots would seem to have left France, including the three hundred thousand who emigrated immediately after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes. The whole population of France was then about fourteen millions, so that here was a direct loss of seven per cent of the people of the country. But mere figures can give no idea of the extent of the damage, for the people who left the

kingdom were not thick-headed peasants. They were mostly skilled and quick-witted artisans, — paper-makers, workers in iron, weavers of linen and wool, manufacturers of finest silks and laces. Among them were eloquent preachers and learned writers, and some of the most thoroughly trained soldiers and seamen that France had ever possessed, insomuch that the royal navy was for a time well-nigh paralyzed by their departure. Wherever they went their nimble fingers, quick eyes, and ready wits insured them cordial welcome. But even in this statement we do not realize how greatly France has suffered by losing them. It is a common opinion to-day among English-speaking people that the French character is to some extent wanting in earnestness and sincerity. Generalizations of this sort about national characteristics are apt to be untrustworthy, and one can hardly venture to say confidently how far this opinion about the French people may be true. No higher or nobler individual types of sincerity and earnestness can anywhere be found than some that France can show us, as, for instance, in the statesman Malesherbes and the scholar Littré. And among the common people it is by no means seldom that one meets the earnest, simple-hearted, unselfish goodness of the watchmaker Melchior Goulden in Erckmann-Chatrian's charming story of the Conscript. To charge the French, as a people, with frivolousness and insincerity is to do them gross injustice. Still, at the bottom of the English prejudice there lies, no doubt, a grain of truth. The Huguenot type of character, in its intense earnestness and uncompromising truthfulness, was like the Puritan type. What the Puritan has been to England the Huguenot might

have been to France could he have stayed and thriven there. Had the Puritans been driven from England, we can readily see that the average character of the English people, as regards sincerity and earnestness, would have been inevitably lowered. And it is impossible that France should have lost out of its population so large a portion as seven per cent, selected precisely because of its signal preëminence in earnestness and sincerity, without seriously affecting the average character of the people for many generations to come.

From these examples we may see that the dangers arising from the expulsion of nonconformists are many and profound. The evil consequences of such a policy are innumerable, and they ramify in countless directions. Such a policy had been intermittently pursued in France ever since the Albigensian horrors of the thirteenth century. But in the worst days of English history no such policy has ever prevailed. The acts against the Lollards, and the brief agony in the reign of Mary Tudor, were weak and ineffectual. The burning of heretics began in England in 1401, and ended in 1611. During those two hundred and ten years the total number of persons put to death was about four hundred. Of these executions about three hundred occurred in the years 1555-1557, under Mary Tudor, leaving a total of one hundred for the rest of the two centuries. The contrast to what went on in other countries is startling. No great body of people has ever been violently expelled from England, so that its peculiar type of character has been subtracted from the subsequent life of the nation. On the contrary, ever since the days of the Plantagenets it has been a

maxim of English law — often violated, no doubt, in evil times, but still forever recognized as a guiding principle — that whosoever among the hunted and oppressed of other realms should set his foot on the sacred soil of Britain became forthwith free, and entitled to all the protection that England's strong arm could afford. On that hospitable soil all types of character, all varieties of temperament, all shades of belief, have flourished side by side, and have interacted upon one another until there has been evolved the most plastic, the most energetic, the most self-reliant, the most cosmopolitan race of men that has yet lived on the earth.

These considerations begin to make it apparent why a people like the English, encountering a people like the French in some new part of the world, would naturally overcome or supplant it. Another circumstance implied in the same group of considerations will make this still more apparent. I said just now that the English alone have succeeded in working up to a highly complex form of civilization without essentially departing from the primitive Aryan principle of government. What we may call the "town-meeting principle," with which we are so familiar as the logical basis of our own American political institutions, was essentially the principle on which the early Aryan communities governed themselves. The great puzzle of nation-making has always been how to secure concerted action on a grand scale without sacrificing this principle of local self-government. The political failure of ancient Greece was the failure to secure concerted action on a sufficiently large scale. Rome succeeded in securing concert of action, but in so



doing sacrificed to a great extent the principle of local self-government. The Roman government came to be a close corporation, administering the affairs of the empire through prefects and subprefects; and when we say that the Teutonic invasions infused new life into Roman Europe, I suppose what we chiefly mean is that the Germans reintroduced to some extent the "town-meeting principle," and strengthened the sense of local and personal independence. In England the principle of local self-government became so deeply rooted that it survived the overthrow of the feudal system; but in France—the most thoroughly Romanized country in Europe—it never acquired a very firm foothold, and the overthrow of the feudal system there resulted in government by a close corporation and prefects, not altogether unlike that of the Roman Empire.

Now, it is one characteristic of these highly centralized forms of government by prefects that they are not easily transplanted. They are highly artificial forms of government, in so far as they are the products of very peculiar combinations of circumstances operating for a long while in a particular country. When taken away from the peculiar sets of circumstances in which they have originated, and introduced into a new field, they fall into decay, unless kept up by support from without. There is no natural principle of life within them. On the other hand, the town meeting, or the assembly of heads of families, is, so to speak, the primordial cell out of which the tissue of political life has been originally woven among all races and nations. The civilized government which has learned how to secure concerted action without forsaking this pri-



mordial principle contains an element of permanence which is independent of peculiar local circumstances. Whithersoever transplanted, it will take root and flourish. It has all the reproductive vitality of cellular tissue, whereas the centralized bureaucracy is as rigid and unplastic as cartilage or bone.

The force of these considerations is nowhere better illustrated than in the contrasted fortunes of the French and English settlements in North America. The French colonies, as we have observed, were planted in accordance with a far-reaching imperial policy, and they were favoured by the especial solicitude of the home government, which well understood their value, and was bitterly chagrined when it became necessary to part with them. Louis XIV. in particular, whose long reign covered something like half of the brief history of New France, thought very highly of his American colonies, and laboured industriously to promote their welfare. One of his pet schemes was to reproduce in the New World the political features of French society in Europe, modifying them only so far as it was necessary in order to secure in the New France a bureaucratic despotism even more ideally complete than that which had grown up in the old country. By a reminiscence of vanquished feudalism the land was parcelled out in seigniories, but the management of affairs was in the hands of a viceroy, or governor-general appointed by the king. The instructions of the governor were prepared with extreme prolixity and minuteness by the king and his ministers; and to insure his carrying them out in every particular another officer was appointed, called the *intendant*, whose principal business was to keep an eye on the governor, and

tell tales about him to the minister of state at home. Another part of the intendant's duty was to travel about the colony and pry into the affairs of every household, in order that whatever was wrong might be set right, and the wants of the people provided for. We can imagine the wrath and the hooting which such an official would have provoked in any English colony that ever existed; but in Canada this sort of thing was thought to be quite proper. No enterprise of any sort was undertaken without an appeal to the king for aid. Bounties were attached to all kinds of trades, in order to encourage them, and at the same time it was attempted to prescribe, as far as possible, the exact percentage of profit which might be legally earned. If people got out of work, they were to be supplied with work at the cost of the government. In order to foster a taste for ship-building, the king had ships built at his own expense; yet at the same time the ships which came over from France often went home empty, save those which by royal edict were allowed to carry furs or lumber. In order to encourage the raising of hemp, it was proposed that all hemp grown within the colony should be purchased by the king at a high price. To encourage agriculture in general, the king sent over seeds of all sorts to be distributed among the farmers gratis, while the intendant went about to see that the seeds were duly planted. While native industry was thus sedulously fostered, foreign trade was absolutely prohibited. No mild prohibitory tariff, such as our modern protectionists advocate, was resorted to, but foreign goods were seized wherever found and solemnly burned in the streets. The interests of landed property were also

looked after. As it is inconvenient that farms should be too small, no one living in the open country was to build a house on any piece of land less than a certain prescribed size, under penalty of seeing his house torn down at the next visit of the intendant. That the morals of these favoured farmers might remain uncorrupted by the splendid vices of great cities, they were forbidden to go to Quebec without permission from the intendant, and any one in the city who should let rooms to them was to be fined a hundred livres, for the benefit of the hospitals. In 1710 the inhabitants of Montreal were prohibited from owning more than two horses or mares, and one foal apiece, on the ground that if they raised too many horses they would not raise enough cattle and sheep!

With a thousand such arbitrary and foolish, though well-meant, regulations the people of Canada were hampered and restricted, so that, in spite of the natural advantages of the country for agriculture, for fisheries, and for the fur trade, there was nothing surprising in the facts that business of every kind languished and that the population increased but slowly. The slowness of increase of the population early attracted the attention of the French government, which laboured earnestly to counteract the evil. No inhabitant of Canada was allowed to visit the English colonies or to come home to France without express permission. Emigrants for Canada were diligently enlisted in France, and sent over in ship-loads every year, being paid bounties for going. Women were sent over in companies of two or three hundred at a time, all carefully sorted and selected as to social position, so that nobles, officers, bourgeois, and peasants might each

find wives to suit them; and each of these prospective brides brought with her a dowry paid by the benevolent king. The arrival of these women was generally preceded or accompanied by a royal order that all bachelors in the colony must get married within two weeks, under penalty of not being allowed to hunt, or catch fish, or trade with the Indians. Every father of a family who had unmarried sons over twenty years of age, or unmarried daughters over sixteen, was subject to a fine unless he could show good cause for his delinquency. The father of ten children received a pension of three hundred livres a year for the rest of his life, while he who had twelve received four hundred, and people in the upper ranks of society who had fifteen children were rewarded with twelve hundred livres. Yet, in spite of all these elaborate devices, the white population of Canada, at the end of the reign of Louis XIV., in 1715, and more than a century after the founding of the colony, did not reach a total of twenty-five thousand.

However absurd such a system of administration may seem to us, it was, after all, only the unflinching application of a theory of protective government which has had very wide currency in the world, and has found too many defenders even in our own self-governing community. The contemporary administration of affairs in France was characterized by many similar errors, and was followed, indeed, in the course of another century, by a terrible spasm of financial ruin and social anarchy. Yet there is one important difference between the results of paternal government administered by a centralized bureaucracy in the country where it has grown up and in the country to which

it is transplanted. In the native country of the bureaucracy a great many of the affairs of life are conducted in accordance with usages established by immemorial custom. Such usages have a certain presumption in their favour, as adapted in some degree to the circumstances of the country; the bureaucracy must be to some extent checked or guided by them, and its capacity for mischief is so far limited. But when the same system of government is transplanted to a new country, its course of procedure is largely a matter of experiment in pursuance of some general or *a priori* theory; and experiments of this sort have always failed. No government that has ever yet existed has possessed enough wisdom to found a prosperous society by any amount of arbitrary administration. When, therefore, the forms and machinery of a centralized despotism are sought to be reproduced away from their connections with the peculiar local traditions amid which they have grown up, it is but the dead husk that is transplanted instead of the living kernel.

While the French colonies in America thus throve so feebly in spite of the anxious care of their sovereign, the English colonies, neglected and left to themselves, were full of sturdy life. The settlers had been accustomed to manage their own affairs at home, instead of having them managed by prefects and intendants. Had their king attempted to deal with them as the benevolent Louis XIV. dealt with his subjects, they would have cut off his head or driven him into exile. In America they conducted themselves very much as they would have done in England, save that they were much freer from interference. Having gone into voluntary exile themselves, they were relieved from the



necessity of beheading the king or driving him into exile, and all they asked was to be let alone. To sundry general commercial restrictions they submitted, especially so long as these restrictions were not enforced, but in all important details each community managed its own affairs according to its own ideas of its own interests.

In ecclesiastical policy the difference between the two peoples was as great as in their political and social life. Religion and the Church occupy as prominent a position in the history of Canada as in that of New England. There are few more heroic chapters in the annals of the Catholic Church than that which recounts the labours and the martyrdom of the Jesuits in North America. Already, before the death of Champlain, the Jesuits had acquired full control of the spiritual affairs of Canada. Their policy aimed at nothing less than the consolidation of the aboriginal tribes into a Christian state under the direct control of the followers of Loyola; and upon this hopelessly impracticable task they entered with an enthusiasm worthy of the noblest of the old crusaders. The character of Maisonneuve claims a place in our affectionate remembrance by the side of Tancred and Godfrey de Bouillon. The charming chronicler Lejeune might be mated with the Sieur de Joinville. Nor was St. Louis himself inspired with a grander fervour than the black-robed priests of the Huron mission. The indomitable Brébeuf, the delicate Lallemand, the long-suffering Jogues, may be ranked with the ancient martyrs of Christianity, and in their heroic lives and deaths the system of Loyola appeared in its brightest and purest light. Though thrown away upon the



Indians, the work of the Jesuits was, after all, the one feature of Canadian polity which possessed sufficient merit to survive the British conquest. Their policy, nevertheless, involved the rigorous exclusion of all freedom of thought from the limits of the colony. No Huguenot was allowed to enter upon any terms. On the other hand, if we consider the Puritans alone, and recollect their treatment of the Quakers in Massachusetts and the Catholics in Maryland, we shall regard their conduct as hardly more politic or commendable than that of the Jesuits. But, if we consider the English colonies all together, the variety of opinion on religious questions was very great; so great that when they came to constitute themselves into a united nation, the only common ground upon which they could possibly meet in ecclesiastical matters was one of unqualified toleration. The heretic in whose face Canada coldly shut the door might be sure of a welcome in one part of English America if not in another.

With all these advantages in their favour, we need not be surprised at the solid and rapid increase of the English colonies. Yet the increase was surprising when compared with anything the world had ever seen before. We do not read that the king of England ever set bounties on large families, or provided wives for the settlers at his own expense. Yet by the year 1750—less than a century and a half from the settlement of Jamestown—the white population of the thirteen colonies had reached a million and a quarter.

The contrast, therefore, with which we opened this chapter was but a superficial one. Great as were the

territorial acquisitions of the French, their actual strength was by no means in proportion, and their project of confining the English behind the Alleghanies was as chimerical as would have been an attempt to stop the flow of the St. Lawrence.

In carrying out their grand project the French relied largely upon their alliances with the Indians, and for this there was some show of reason. As a general thing the French were far more successful than the English in winning the favour of the savages. They treated them with a firmness and tact very different from the disdainful coldness of the English. They humoured and cajoled them, even while inspiring them with wholesome terror. The haughty and fiery Frontenac, most punctilious of courtiers, with the bluest blood of France flowing in his veins, at the age of seventy did not think it beneath his dignity to smear his cheeks with vermilion and caper madly about in the war-dance, brandishing a tomahawk over his head and yelling like a screech-owl or a cougar. Imagine Governor Winthrop or Governor Endicott acting such a part as this! On the other hand, if an Indian was arrested for murdering a Frenchman, he was hanged in a trice by martial law, and such summary justice the Indians feared and respected. But when an Indian was arrested for murdering an Englishman, he was put upon his trial, with all the safeguards of the English criminal law, and such conscientious clemency the Indians despised as sentimental weakness. Captain Écuyer—a Frenchman in the English service at the time of Pontiac's war—gave an excellent illustration of the Frenchman's native tact in dealing with his red brother. Ecuyer was in command of Fort Pitt—where

Pittsburg now stands — and an attacking force of Delawares summoned him to surrender, with sugared words, assuring him that if he would retreat to Carlisle, they would protect him from some bad Indians in the neighbourhood who thirsted for his blood ; but if he stayed, they would not be responsible for the consequences. Écuyer thanked them for their truly disinterested advice, but assured them that he did not care a rush for the bad Indians, and meant to remain where he was ; but, he added, “an army of six thousand pale-faces is now on the way hither, and another of three thousand has just gone up the lakes to annihilate Pontiac, so you had better be off. I have told you this in acknowledgment of your friendly counsels to me ; but don’t whisper it to those bad Indians, for fear they should run away from our deadly vengeance !” This story of the English armies was, of course, a lie of the first magnitude. The poor fellow had but a handful of men wherewith to repel his swarm of assailants, and he knew very well that any reënforcement was rather to be longed for than expected. But his adroit lie sent the savages away in a panic without further provoking their wrath, and so was worth much more than a successful battle.

Skilful as the French usually were in their dealings with the savages, their position in the country was nevertheless such that at an early period they were brought into conflict with the most warlike of all the Indian tribes, and this circumstance interfered materially with the success of the Canadian colony. In the seventeenth century the country east of the Mississippi, from the line of Tennessee and the Carolinas northward to Hudson Bay, was occupied by two families or races

of Indians, differing radically from each other in their speech, and slightly in their physical characteristics. These were called by the French the Algonquin and Iroquois families. Our old New England acquaintances — the Pequods, Narragansetts, Mohegans, and Abenakis — were all Algonquins. The Delawares, who lived in Virginia, Pennsylvania, and New Jersey, were also Algonquins. So were the Shawnees of the Ohio, the Miamis of the Wabash, the Illinois, the Kickapoos of southern Wisconsin, the Pottawatomies and Ojibwas of Michigan, and the Ottawas of Michigan and Upper Canada. Lower Canada and Acadia were also inhabited by Algonquin tribes. In the central portion of this vast country, surrounded on every side by Algonquins, dwelt the Iroquois. The so-called Five Nations occupied the central portion of New York; to the south of them were the Andastes or Susquehannocks; the Eries lived on the southern shore of the lake which bears their name; and the northern shore was occupied by a tribe known as the Neutral Nation. To the north of these came the Hurons. One Iroquois tribe — the Tuscaroras — lay quite apart from the rest, in North Carolina; but in 1715 this tribe migrated to New York, and joined the famous Iroquois league, which was henceforth known as the Six Nations. The Indians south of the Tennessee and Carolina line, such as the Creeks, Cherokees, Seminoles, Choctaws, and Chickasaws, belong to a third family — the Mobilian — distinct from the Algonquins and Iroquois. The Natchez of the Lower Mississippi are supposed by some ethnologists to have been an intruding branch of the Mexican Toltecs. Far north, in Wisconsin, the well-known Winnebagos were

also intruders; they belonged to the Sioux or Dakota stock, whose home was then, as now, west of the great river.


Between the Algonquins and the Iroquois were many important differences. They differed radically, as already observed, in their speech. They differed also in their modes of building their wigwams and fortifying their villages. The mythology of the Algonquins, moreover, was distinct from that of the Iroquois. There were many degrees of barbarism among the Algonquins, from the New England tribes, which cultivated the soil, down to the Ojibwas, who were very degraded and shiftless savages. But the Iroquois were superior to any of the Algonquins. They were somewhat finer in physical appearance, and they were better fighters. They are said to have had somewhat larger brains; they understood more about agriculture; they were more capable of acting in concert. They were very well aware of their superiority, and looked down with ineffable contempt upon the Algonquins, by whom they were in turn regarded with an almost superstitious hatred and fear.

Of all the Iroquois the most formidable in numbers, the bravest in war, and the shrewdest in diplomacy were the Five Nations of New York — the Mohawks, Oneidas, Onondagas, Cayugas, and Senecas. The favourite Iroquois name for this mighty league is interesting. It was the custom of all the Iroquois tribes to build their wigwams very long and narrow. Sometimes an Iroquois house would be two hundred and fifty feet in length by thirty in width, with a door at each end. A narrow opening along the whole length



of the roof let in the light and let out some of the smoke from the row of fires kindled on the ground beneath. A rude scaffolding ran along each side some three feet from the ground, and on this the inmates slept while their firewood was piled underneath. In this way from twenty to thirty families might be lodged in a single wigwam. By a very picturesque metaphor the Iroquois of New York called their great confederacy the Long House. The Mohawks, at the Hudson River, kept the eastern door of the Long House, and the Senecas, at the Genesee, guarded the western door, while the central council fire burned in the valley of Onondaga, and was flanked to the right by the Oneidas, and to the left by the Cayugas.

The ferocity of these New York Indians was as conspicuous as their courage, and their confederated strength made them more than a match for all their rivals—so that at the time of the first French and English settlements they were rapidly becoming the terror of the whole country. Turning their arms first against their own kindred, in 1649 they overwhelmed and nearly destroyed the tribe of Hurons, putting the Jesuit missionaries to death with frightful tortures. Next they exterminated the Neutral Nation. In 1655 they massacred most of the Eries, and incorporated the rest among their own numbers; and in 1672, after a terrible war of twenty years, they completed the ruin of the Susquehannocks. At the same time they made much easier work of their Algonquin enemies. They drove the Ottawas from Canada into Michigan. They allied themselves with the Miamis, and overthrew the power of the Illinois in 1680, at the time when La Salle was making his adventurous journeys. They





then turned upon the Miamis and defeated them, and drove the Shawnees a long way down the Ohio. Some time before this they had conquered the Delawares; and this circumstance should be taken into account in considering the remarkable success of Penn and his followers in keeping clear of Indian troubles. A conciliatory policy had no doubt something to do with this; but it is not true that the Quakers were the only settlers who paid for their lands instead of taking them by force, for the Puritans of New England had done so in every case except that of the Pequods. It is worthy of consideration that, at the time when Pennsylvania was colonized, the Delawares had been thoroughly humbled by the Iroquois, and forced into a treaty by which they submitted to be called "women" and to forego the use of arms. The price of the lands sold to Penn was paid twice over — to the Delawares, who actually occupied them, and again to the Iroquois, who had obtained them by conquest. Thus the victors were kept in good humour, and the vanquished Indians did not dare to molest the Quaker settlements for fear of Iroquois vengeance.

But the Iroquois had a deeper reason for wishing to keep on good terms with the English. As early as the time of Champlain they had been brought into deadly collision with the French, who certainly had not yet learned the importance of their friendship, and perhaps were not in a condition to secure it if they had. Settling first among the Algonquin tribes of the St. Lawrence, it was perhaps inevitable that the French should court the friendship of these tribes by defending them against their hereditary enemies. In 1609 Champlain attacked the Mohawks near Ticon-

deroga, and won an easy victory over savages who had never before beheld a white man or heard the report of a musket. From that time forth the Iroquois hated the French, and after the destruction of the Huron mission the French had good reason for reciprocating the hatred. In 1664 the English supplanted the Dutch in the control of the Hudson, and thus for the first time came into formidable proximity to Canada; and now began the rivalry between French and English which lasted for ninety-nine years. A sort of alliance naturally grew up between the English and the Five Nations, while, on the other hand, the French sought to control the policy of all the Algonquin tribes from the Penobscot to the Mississippi, and to bring them into the field against the dreaded warriors of the Long House. But there was a difference between these two alliances. The English valued the friendship of the Iroquois partly as a protection against Canada, partly as a means of gaining access to the lakes and obtaining a share in the fur trade; but, in spite of all this, they took very little pains to conciliate their dusky allies, and generally left them to fight their own battles. On the other hand, the far-sighted policy of the French made firm allies of the Algonquin tribes and of the remnant of the Hurons, and taken together they were more than a match for the Iroquois. Yet for a long time the contest was by no means an unequal one. The Five Nations held their ground bravely, and at times seemed to be getting the best of it. They inflicted immense damage upon the Canadian settlements. From one end of the Long House the Mohawks were perpetually taking the war-path down Lake Champlain, while

from the other the Senecas interrupted the fur trade on the western lakes, and the central tribes infested the upper St. Lawrence. In the summer of 1689 they penetrated as far as Montreal, and shouted defiance to the garrison, while they laid waste the country for miles around, and roasted and devoured their prisoners in full sight of the terror-stricken town. This achievement, however, marked the acme of their success and of their power. The next year they had to reckon with a skilful and indomitable soldier in the person of Count Frontenac, and the fates were no longer propitious to them.

Frontenac had already been governor of New France for ten years, from 1672 to 1682. Court scandal said that he was a rival of Louis XIV. in the affections of Madame De Montespan, and that the jealous king had sent him over to America to get him out of the way. He was an able administrator and a man of large views. He even saw the desirableness of introducing an element of local self-government into the Canadian community, and strove to do so, though unsuccessfully. He sympathized with La Salle in his adventurous schemes, and aided them to the extent of his ability. Had he been properly supported by the king, he might perhaps have carried out the bold suggestion of Talon, and wrested from the English their lately acquired province of New York, thus isolating New England, and materially strengthening the grasp of France upon the American continent. But he unwisely made enemies of the Jesuits, and his fiery temper and implacable stubbornness got him into so many quarrels that, in 1682, he was ordered home. Now, after seven years of neglect,

he was reinstated by the king, and Canada welcomed him back as the only man who could save the country. No better man could have been chosen for the purpose. Though seventy years of age, he still retained something of the buoyancy of youth; in dauntless courage and fertility of resource he was not unlike his friend La Salle; and he was quite unrivalled in his knowledge of the dark and crooked ways of the Indian mind.

At Frontenac's arrival the enmities of all the hostile parties, both red and white, encamped upon American soil, were all at once allowed free play. The tyrant James II. had just been driven into exile at Versailles; and Louis XIV., unwilling to give up the check upon English policy which he had so long exercised through his ascendancy over the mean-spirited Stuarts, and enraged beyond measure at the sudden accession of power now acquired by his arch-enemy, William of Orange — Louis XIV., who had but lately revoked the Edict of Nantes, and committed himself to a deadly struggle with all the liberal tendencies of the age, now declared war against England. This, of course, meant war in the New World as well as the Old, and left the doughty Frontenac quite unhampered in his plans for striking terror into the hearts of the foes of Canada.

Frontenac's first proceeding was to send scalping parties against the English settlements, not merely to annoy the English, but also to retrieve in the minds of his Indian allies and enemies the somewhat shaken military reputation of the French. In February, 1690, a small party of Frenchmen and Algonquins from Montreal, after a difficult march of three weeks

through the snow, surprised Schenectady at midnight, and slaughtered some sixty of the inhabitants. In the following month a similar barbarous attack was made upon Salmon Falls, in New Hampshire; and shortly after, Fort Loyal, standing where now is the foot of India Street, in the city of Portland, experienced the same sort of treatment. This policy accomplished so much that it was tried again. In 1692, York was laid in ashes, and one-third of the inhabitants massacred. In 1694, two hundred and thirty Algonquins, led by one French officer and one Jesuit priest, surprised the village at Oyster River — now Durham, about twelve miles from Portsmouth — and murdered one hundred and four persons, mostly women and children. Some of the unhappy victims were burned alive. Emboldened by this success, the barbarians next attacked Groton, in Massachusetts, where they slew forty people.

Similar incursions were made from year to year. A raid on Haverhill in 1697 has become famous through the bold exploit of a village Amazon. Hannah Dustin had seven days before given birth to a child, and lay in the farmhouse, waited on by her kindly neighbour, Mary Neff. Her husband was at work in a field hard by, having with him their seven children, of whom the youngest was but two years old. All at once the war-whoop sounded in Dustin's ears, and snatching his gun and leaping on his horse he galloped toward the farmhouse, when he saw that the Indians were there before him, so that his presence would be of no avail. Turning quickly back to the field, he thought to seize as many of the children as he could, and gallop away; but when he looked upon the seven dear little faces



he knew not which to choose. So, picking up the infant, he told the others all to run on before him through the open fields, while he walked his horse and kept firing Parthian shots at the Indians. Thus for more than a mile they made their way to a fortified house, while the prudent redskins, rather than follow an armed and desperate man, chose the pleasanter task of assailing defenceless women in their homes. The new-born babe they slung against a tree, dashing out its brains, and Mrs. Dustin and Mary Neff they dragged away into the forest, whither many of their friends and neighbours had already been taken. The savages, holding a council, proceeded to tomahawk many of their prisoners, and the rest they divided among one another as prizes to be taken home to Canada and tortured to death. Mrs. Dustin and her friend were assigned to a party consisting of two warriors, three squaws, and seven young Indians, and with them there went an English boy from Worcester who had been captured some time before and understood the Algonquin language. These bloodthirsty savages were devout Catholics, brought into the Christian fold by Jesuit eloquence, and daily they counted over their rosaries and mumbled their guttural paternosters. To the natural delight which the Indian felt in roasting a captive, they could add the keener zest which thrilled the soul of the follower of Loyola in delivering up a heretic unto Satan. But Mrs. Dustin had no mind to yield herself to their horrid schemes. One night, while the Indians were sound asleep by their camp-fire in the depths of the New Hampshire forest, near the upper waters of the Merrimac, the two women and the boy rose silently and took each a tomahawk, and



with swift and well-aimed blows crushed in the skulls of ten of their sleeping enemies. One little boy they spared; one wrinkled squaw awoke betimes and fled screeching through the darkness. The ten dead savages Mrs. Dustin scalped, and getting into a bark canoe the three doughty companions floated down the Merrimac till they reached the village of Haverhill. The fame of their exploit went far and wide throughout the land. A bounty of £50 was paid them for the ten scalps, and the governor of distant Maryland sent them a present in guerdon of their prowess. The ghastly story has never been forgotten, but is told to-day to all school children, though school children are not always taught to associate these incidents with Count Frontenac, or with the expulsion of the Stuart kings from Great Britain.

Such barbarous warfare as this does not redound to the credit of Frontenac, though personally he seems to have been humane and generous according to the standards of his age and country. The delightful Jesuit historian, Charlevoix, recounts these massacres of the heretical Puritans with emphatic approval. In New England they awakened intense horror and indignation. It was resolved to attack Canada. In 1690, after the massacres at Salmon Falls and Fort Loyal, two thousand Massachusetts militia, under Sir William Phips, actually sailed up the St. Lawrence and laid siege to Quebec; while Winthrop, of Connecticut, started from Albany to create a diversion on the side of Montreal. But these amateur generals were no match for Frontenac, and both expeditions returned home crestfallen with disastrous defeat. Massachusetts, loaded with a debt of fifty thousand

pounds, was obliged for a time to issue paper money. In the following year, Peter Schuyler, with a force of New York militia and Mohawks, descended Lake Champlain, and defeated the French in a fierce and obstinate battle; but nothing came of the victory, and the end of the campaign left Frontenac master of the situation.

Having thus successfully defied the English and won a mighty reputation among his Algonquin allies, the veteran governor was now prepared to chastise the Iroquois. In 1693 a small French army under Courtemanche overran the Mohawk country and destroyed several towns, retreating after a drawn battle with Peter Schuyler. In 1696 Frontenac himself, at the head of two battalions of French regulars, eight hundred Canadian militia, and a swarm of screeching Hurons and Ottawas, crossed Lake Ontario, and battered down, so to speak, the centre of the Long House. Carried in triumph on the shoulders of the exulting Indians, the old general, now in his seventy-seventh year, advanced boldly into the sacred precincts of the Onondagas, whither white men had never yet set foot save as envoys on the most dangerous of missions, or as prisoners to be burned at the stake. Most of the Onondaga warriors fled in dismay, but their towns were utterly destroyed, all their winter stores captured, and their whole country laid waste. A similar punishment was then inflicted upon the Oneidas, and the motley army returned to Canada, taking along with them a great number of war chiefs as hostages. In the following year the Iroquois, cowed by defeat and famine, sent an embassy to Quebec to see if they could make a separate peace with the French, without

engaging to keep their hands off the Algonquins. But Frontenac flung their wampum belt back into their faces, and demanded unconditional submission, under penalty of worse treatment than they had yet experienced.

In February, 1698, the news of the peace of Ryswick ended the war, so far as the French and English were concerned. In November of the same year Frontenac died at Quebec, bitterly hated by his rivals and enemies, dreaded and admired by the Indians, idolized by the common people, and respected by all for his probity and his soldierly virtues. His stormy administration had been fruitful of benefits to Canada. By humbling the Iroquois the French ascendancy over all the Indian tribes was greatly increased. During the merciless campaigns of the past ten years the Long House had lost more than half of its warriors, and was left in such a state of dilapidation and dejection that Canada had but little to fear from it in future. In 1715 the fighting strength of the confederacy was partially repaired by the adoption of the kindred tribe of the Tuscaroras, who had just been expelled from North Carolina by the English settlers, and migrated to New York. After this accession the Iroquois, henceforth known as the Six Nations, formed a power by no means to be despised. But their haughty spirit was so far broken that they became accessible to the arts of French diplomacy, and at times they were almost persuaded to make common cause with the other Indian tribes against the English. That they did not finally forsake the English alliance was perhaps chiefly due to the extraordinary ascendancy acquired over them by Sir William Johnson, an Irish-

man who came over to America in 1734, and settled in the Mohawk Valley, building two strongholds there, known as Johnson Castle and Johnson Hall. Acquiring wealth by trade with the Indians of New York, and political importance through his skill in managing them, Johnson was made a major-general in 1755, and defeated the French at Lake George in that year, and at Niagara in 1759. He was made a baronet for his services, and died in 1774, as some say through grief at the impending prospect of war between his sovereign and his fellow-citizens.

Freed from the attacks of the Iroquois, Canada, at the beginning of the eighteenth century, entered upon a period of comparative prosperity, and during the first half of the century she continued to be a thorn in the side of New England. Before the final conflict began, France and England were at war from 1702 to 1713, and again from 1741 to 1748, a total of eighteen years, and during most of these years the New England frontier was exposed to savage inroads. There was an atrocious massacre at Deerfield in 1704, and another at Haverhill in 1708, and at all times there was terror on the frontier. Even in time of peace the Indians did not wholly cease from their incursions, and there is little doubt that their turbulence was secretly fomented by the Canadian government. In 1745 the indignant New Englanders tasted for a moment the sweets of legitimate revenge. The strongest and most important fortress of the French in America, next to Quebec, was Louisburg, on Cape Breton Island, which commanded the fisheries and the approaches to the St. Lawrence. At the instance of Governor Shirley, three thousand volunteers were

raised by Massachusetts, three hundred by New Hampshire, three hundred by Rhode Island, and five hundred by Connecticut. The whole force was commanded by William Pepperell, a merchant of Maine. With the assistance of four English ships of the line, they laid siege to Louisburg on May-day, 1745, and pressed the matter so vigorously that on the 17th of June — just thirty years before the battle of Bunker Hill — the French commander was browbeaten into surrendering his almost impregnable fortress. The gilded iron cross over the new entrance to Harvard College Library is a trophy of this memorable exploit, which not only astonished the world, but saved New England from a contemplated French invasion. Greatly to the chagrin of the American colonies, the treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle restored Louisburg to the French, in exchange for Madras, in Hindustan, which France had taken from England. The men of New England felt that their services were held cheap, and were much irritated at the preference accorded by the British government to its general imperial interests at the expense of its American colonies.

A great war had now become inevitable. By the treaty of Utrecht, in 1713, Acadia had been ceded to England, but neither this treaty nor that of Aix-la-Chapelle, in 1748, defined the boundary between Acadia and Maine, nor did either treaty do anything toward settling the eastern limits of Louisiana. The Penobscot Valley furnished one ever burning question, and the New York frontier another. The dispute over the Ohio Valley was the fiercest of all, and from this quarter at last arose the conflagration which swept away all the hopes of French colonial empire in



two hemispheres. In 1750, the Ohio Company, formed for the purpose of colonizing the valley, had surveyed the country as far as the present site of Louisville. In 1753 the French, taking the alarm, crossed Lake Erie and began to fortify themselves at Presque Isle and at Venango on the Allegheny River. This aroused the ire of Virginia, and George Washington—a venturesome and hardy youth of twenty-one, but gifted with a sagacity beyond his years—was sent by Governor Dinwiddie to Venango to order off the trespassers. Washington got scanty comfort from this mission; but the next spring both French and English tried to forestall each other in fortifying the all-important place where the Allegheny and Monongahela rivers join to form the Ohio, the place where the city of Pittsburg now stands. In the course of these preliminary manœuvres, Washington fought his first battle at Great Meadows,—though as yet war had not been declared between France and England,—and being attacked by an overwhelmingly superior force, was obliged to surrender, with the whole of his little army. So the French got possession of the much-coveted situation, and erected there Fort Duquesne as a menace to all future English intruders. In 1755 the English accepted the challenge, and it was in attempting to reach Fort Duquesne that the unwary Braddock was slain, and his army so wofully defeated by swarms of Ottawas, Hurons, and Delawares, which the Frenchmen's forest diplomacy had skilfully gathered together.

The defeat of Braddock is memorable on many accounts, but chiefly for the way in which it inured to the credit of the youthful Washington, while it dis-



pelled the glamour of invincibleness which had hitherto hung about the trained soldiery of Britain. When Braddock was appointed commander-in-chief of the forces which were to ward off French aggression in the Ohio Valley, he set about his task in high spirits. He told Benjamin Franklin that Fort Duquesne could hardly detain him more than three or four days, and then he would be ready to march across country to Niagara, and thence to Fort Frontenac. And when the sagacious Franklin reminded him that the Indians were adepts in the art of laying ambuscades, he scornfully answered, "The savages may be formidable to your raw American militia; upon the king's regulars and disciplined troops it is impossible that they should make any impression." In this too confident mood the expedition started. There were more than two thousand men in all,—British regulars, and colonial militia from Virginia and New York. Washington was there as aid to General Braddock, and along with him, arrayed under one banner, were Horatio Gates and Thomas Gage. In every way Braddock made light of his American allies, calling in question, not only their bravery and skill, but even their common honesty, and behaving in all respects as disagreeably as he could. Their road was difficult in the extreme. At its best it was a bridle-path no more than ten feet wide, and desperately encumbered with underbrush and fallen tree-trunks. Through the dense forest and over the rugged mountains they thus made their way in a straggling line nearly four miles long, exposed at every moment to sudden overthrow by a flank attack; and so slow was their progress that it took them five weeks to accomplish one hundred and thirty miles.

Wearied and impatient of such delay, Braddock at last left his heavy guns and wagons, and pushed on with twelve hundred picked men till he was within ten miles of Fort Duquesne. Suddenly the dense woods were ablaze on every side with the fire of rifles wielded by an invisible foe. The ambuscade had been most skilfully prepared by Charles de Langlade, a redoubtable *coureur de bois*. It was in vain that a few cannon were tardily hauled upon the scene. The regulars were overcome with panic and thrown into hopeless disorder, while the merciless fire cut down scores every minute. Out of eighty officers, sixty were soon disabled. Braddock, after having five horses shot under him, fell, mortally wounded. The Virginia troops alone kept in order under the terrible fire, and Washington, putting himself at their head, covered the flight of the British remnant and saved it from utter destruction. Of the twelve hundred picked men, more than seven hundred were slain; all the artillery and baggage wagons were lost; the frontiers of Virginia, Maryland, and Pennsylvania were uncovered, and the dreadful story of Indian massacre soon began in the outlying villages. In this fierce woodland fight the loss of the ambushed Frenchmen and Indians had not exceeded sixty men. The fame of the British overthrow went far and wide throughout North America. Its immediate consequences were soon repaired, but the lesson which it taught was not soon forgotten. As the unfortunate Braddock had himself invited the comparison, men were not slow in contrasting the inefficiency of the British officers and troops with the stanchness of the Virginians and the skill of their young commander. And in later years, when in town

meetings and at tavern firesides men discussed the feasibility of resisting George III., the incidents of Braddock's defeat did not fail to point a suggestive moral.

The war thus inauspiciously begun was not confined to American soil. After three-quarters of a century of vague skirmishing, England was now prepared to measure her strength with France in a decisive struggle for colonial empire and for the lordship of the sea. The whole world was convulsed with the struggle of the Seven Years' War—a war more momentous in its consequences than any that had ever yet been carried on between rival European powers; a war made illustrious by the genius of one of the greatest generals, and of perhaps the very greatest war minister, the world has ever seen. It was an evil hour for French hopes of colonial empire when the invincible prowess of Frederick the Great was allied with the far-sighted policy of William Pitt. In the autumn of 1757, shortly after the Great Commoner was intrusted with the direction of the foreign affairs of England, the king of Prussia annihilated the French army at Rossbach, and thus—to say nothing of the immediate results—prepared the way for Waterloo and Sedan, and for the creation of a united and independent Germany. Yet, in spite of this overwhelming victory, the united strength of France and Austria and Russia would at last have proved too much for the warlike king, had not England thrown sword and purse into the scale in his favour. By his firm and energetic support of Prussia, Pitt kept the main strength of France busily occupied in Europe, while English fleets attacked her on the ocean, and English armies overran her posses-

sions in America, and wrested from her grasp the control of India, which she was also seeking to acquire.

At the time of Pitt's accession to power, affairs were not going on prosperously in America. The crushing defeat of Braddock had, indeed, been followed by the victory of Johnson over Dieskau at Lake George. But this victory did more harm than good; for Johnson remained inactive after it, and Dieskau, having been taken prisoner, was succeeded by the famous Marquis of Montcalm, a general of great ability, who resumed offensive operations with vigour and success. In 1756 Montcalm destroyed Oswego; in 1757 he captured Fort William Henry, which Johnson had built to defend the northern approaches to the Hudson; and in 1758 he defeated the English with heavy loss in the desperate battle of Ticonderoga.

This signal defeat of the English possesses some interest as one among many illustrations of the difficulty of carrying by storm a strongly intrenched position. In July, 1758, General Abercrombie, at the head of fifteen thousand men, the largest army that had ever been assembled in America, crossed Lake George, and advanced upon the strong position which barred the approach to Canada from the valley of the Hudson. In a preliminary skirmish was slain Lord Howe, elder brother of the admiral and the general of the War of Independence, an able and gallant officer, who had so endeared himself to the Americans that Massachusetts afterward raised a monument to his memory in Westminster Abbey. The force with which Montcalm held Ticonderoga numbered little more than three thousand, and as it was thought that reënforcements were on their way to him, Abercrombie decided to hazard a direct as-

sault. The result was a useless slaughter, like that which the present generation has witnessed at Fredericksburg and Cold Harbor. After an obstinate struggle of four hours, in which the gallant Englishmen dashed themselves repeatedly against a stout breastwork nine feet high, they lost heart and withdrew in disorder, leaving two thousand men killed or wounded on the field. For this disastrous error of judgment Abercrombie was superseded by General Amherst.

The victory of Ticonderoga was, however, the last considerable success of the French arms in this war. The stars in their courses had begun to fight against them, and, with the exception of this brief gleam of triumph, their career for the next two years was an unbroken succession of disasters. In 1758 the French fleets were totally defeated by Admiral Osborne off Cartagena, and by Admiral Pococke in the Indian Ocean, while their great squadron destined for North America was driven ashore in the Bay of Biscay by Sir Edward Hawke. In Germany, their army was defeated by the Prince of Brunswick, at Crefeld, in June.

In America prodigious exertions were made. Massachusetts raised 7000 men, and during the year contributed more than a million dollars toward the expenses of the war. Connecticut raised 5000 troops; New Hampshire and Rhode Island furnished 1000 between them; New York raised 2680; New Jersey, 1000; Pennsylvania, 2700; Virginia, 2000, and South Carolina, 1250. With these provincial troops, with 22,000 British regulars, and with an especial levy of Highlanders from Scotland, there were in all 50,000 troops collected for the overthrow of the French power



in America. With such vigorous preparations as these, events proceeded rapidly. In July, General Amherst captured Louisburg, and finally relieved New England from its standing menace, besides securing the mouth of the St. Lawrence. In August, General Bradstreet, by the destruction of Fort Frontenac, broke the communication between Canada and the French settlements in the West. In November, General Forbes, having built a road over the Alleghanies and being assisted by Washington and Henry Bouquet, succeeded in capturing Fort Duquesne, which then became Fort Pitt, and now as Pittsburg still bears the name of the great war minister.

The capture of this important post gave the English the control of the Ohio Valley, and thus secured the object for which the war had been originally undertaken. Great were the rejoicings in Pennsylvania and Virginia, and great was the honour accorded to Washington, to whose skill the capture of the "gateway of the West" had been chiefly due. But Pitt had now made up his mind to drive the French from America altogether, and what had been done was only the prelude to heavier blows. Terrible was the catalogue of French defeats. In 1759 their army in Germany was routed at Minden by the Prince of Brunswick; one great fleet was defeated at Lagos Bay by Admiral Boscawen, and another was annihilated at Quiberon by Sir Edward Hawke; Havre was bombarded by Admiral Rodney; Guadeloupe, the most valuable of the French West Indies, was taken; and serious reverses were experienced in India. In America, Niagara was taken on the 24th of July, Ticonderoga on the 27th, and Crown Point on the 1st of August. And



the 13th of September witnessed the last great scene in this eventful story.

Crestfallen with calamity, the people of Canada had begun to cry for peace at any price; but Montcalm, ensconced with seven thousand men in the impregnable stronghold of Quebec, declared that, though the outlook was anything but cheering, he had not lost courage, but was resolved to find his grave under the ruins of the colony. Quebec was the objective point of the summer campaign, and early in June the youthful General Wolfe had appeared in the St. Lawrence with an army of eight thousand men, supported by a powerful fleet of twenty-two ships of the line, with as many frigates. In this memorable expedition Colonel Barré, afterward the eloquent friend of the American colonies in Parliament, was adjutant-general; a regiment of light infantry was commanded by William Howe; and one of the ships had for its captain the immortal navigator, James Cook. It was intended that Johnson, after taking Niagara, and Amherst, after taking Ticonderoga and Crown Point, should unite their forces with those of Wolfe, and overwhelm the formidable Montcalm by sheer weight of numbers. But Johnson failed for want of ships to transport his men, and Amherst failed through dulness of mind, so that Wolfe was left to do the work alone. The task was well-nigh impossible, though the powerful English fleet had full control of the river. Standing on a lofty rock just above the junction of the St. Charles and St. Lawrence rivers, and guarded by water on three sides, Quebec was open to a land attack only on the north-west side, where the precipice was so steep as to be deemed inaccessible. After wasting the summer in

abortive attacks and fruitless efforts to take the wary Montcalm at a disadvantage, Wolfe suddenly made up his mind to perform the impossible, and lead his army up the dangerous precipice. A decided movement of the fleet drew Montcalm's attention far up the river, while at one o'clock in the morning of the 13th of September five thousand Englishmen in boats, without touching an oar, glided steadily down-stream with the current, and landed just under the steep bluff. Maple and ash trees grew on the side, and pulling themselves up by branches and bare gnarled roots from tree to tree, with herculean toil the light infantry gained the summit and overpowered the small picket stationed there, while the heavy-armed troops made their way up a rough winding path near by. By daybreak the ascent was accomplished, and the English army stood in solid array on the Heights of Abraham, with the doomed city before them. When the news was conveyed to Montcalm, in his camp the other side of the St. Charles, he thought at first that it must be a feint to draw him from his position; but when he had so far recovered from his astonishment as to comprehend what had happened, he saw that his only hope lay in crushing the intruders before noon, and without a moment's delay he broke camp and marched for the enemy. At ten o'clock the two armies stood face to face, equal in numbers, but very unequal in quality. The five thousand Englishmen were all thoroughly disciplined soldiers, while of Montcalm's force but two thousand were French regulars, the rest being unsteady Canadian militia. France was kept altogether too busy in Europe to be able to spare many trained soldiers to defend her tottering empire in America.

After an hour of weak cannonading the French army charged upon the Englishmen, who stood as firm as a stone wall and with a swift and steady musket fire soon made the French recoil. As soon as the French attack wavered, the English in turn promptly charged, and the enemy were routed. In this supreme moment the two heroic commanders were borne from the field with mortal wounds, and as life ebbed quickly away each said his brief and touching word which history will never forget. "Now, God be praised, I will die in peace," said Wolfe; "Thank God, I shall not live to see Quebec surrendered," said the faithful Frenchman. These noble deaths, and the wild hardihood of the feat that had just been accomplished, mark well the battle which completed the ruin of the colonial empire of Catholic and despotic France. There have been many greater generals than Wolfe, as there have been many greater battles than the battle of Quebec. But just as the adventurous boldness of that morning's exploit stands unsurpassed in history, so in its far-reaching historic significance the victory of Wolfe stands foremost among modern events. As the boats were gliding quietly down the river in the darkness, while the great events of the next ten hours were still in the unknown future, the young general repeated to his friends standing about him the exquisite verses of Gray's "Elegy written in a Country Churchyard," which had been published only ten years before, and declared that he would rather have written that poem than take Quebec. Could he have foreseen all that his victory would mean to future ages, and what a landmark it would forever remain in the history of mankind, he might perhaps have modi-

fied this generous judgment. The battle of Quebec did not make the supremacy of the English race in the world; but as marking the moment at which that supremacy first became clearly manifest, it deserves even more than the meed of fame which history has assigned to it.

During the progress of this eventful war, the tribes of the Long House, under the influence of Sir William Johnson, had either remained neutral, or had occasionally assisted the English cause. The Algonquin tribes, however, from east to west—including even the Delawares, who, since the decline of the Iroquois power, no longer consented to call themselves women—made common cause with the French, and in many cases proved very formidable allies. The overthrow of the French power came as a terrible shock to these Indians, who now found themselves quite unprotected from English encroachment. At first they refused to believe that the catastrophe was irretrievable, and one great Indian conceived a plan for retrieving it.

Of all the Indians of whom we have any record, there were few more remarkable for intellectual power than Pontiac, chief of the Ottawas. He was as fierce and treacherous as any of his race, but he was characterized by an intellectual curiosity very rare among barbarians, and he exhibited an amount of forethought truly wonderful in an Indian. It seemed to him that if all the tribes in the country could be brought to unite in one grand attack upon the English, they might perhaps succeed in overthrowing them. It was a scheme like that which perhaps on insufficient grounds has been ascribed to the Wampanoag Philip, but the war set on foot by Pontiac was of far greater dimen-

sions than "King Philip's War," though the suffering and terror it inflicted were confined to what then seemed a distant frontier. The time had gone by when the English colonies could suppose, even in a momentary fit of wild despondency, that their existence was seriously threatened. The scene of Pontiac's war, compared with Philip's, marks the progress of the white men, and shows how far the exposed frontier had been thrown westward. After the conquest of Canada the Indian disappears forever from the history of New England, and except in the remote forests of northern Maine hardly a vestige of his presence has been left there. The tribes which Pontiac aroused to bloodshed were the Algonquin tribes of the Upper Lakes, and of the Mississippi and Ohio valleys, with some of the Mobilians and the remnant of the Hurons; and out of the Iroquois league his crafty eloquence prevailed upon the most numerous tribe, the Senecas, who were less completely under English influence than their brethren east of the Genesee.

The peace of 1763 between France and England had been signed but three short months when this new war unexpectedly broke out. Two years of savage butchery ensued, in the course of which nearly all the forest garrisons in the West were overcome and massacred, though the stronger places, such as Detroit and Fort Pitt, succeeded with some difficulty in holding out. The wild frontier of Pennsylvania became the scene of atrocities which beggar description. Night after night the forest clearings were made hideous with the glare of blazing log cabins and the screams of murdered women and children. The traveller through the depths of the



woods was frequently appalled by the sight of the scorched and blackened corpses of men and women tightly bound to tree-trunks, where their lives had gone out amid diabolical torments. During the summer and autumn of 1763 more than two thousand persons were murdered or carried into captivity, while the more sheltered towns and villages to the eastward were crowded with starving refugees who had escaped the firebrand and the tomahawk.

One fiendish incident of that bad time especially called forth the horror and rage of the people. A man, passing by a little schoolhouse rudely built of logs and standing on a lonely road, but many miles inside the frontier, "was struck by the unwonted silence; and, pushing open the door, he looked in. In the centre lay the master, scalped and lifeless, with a Bible clasped in his hand; while around the room were strewn the bodies of his pupils, nine in number, miserably mangled, though one of them still retained a spark of life." Maddened by such dreadful deeds, and unable to obtain from the government at Philadelphia a force adequate for the protection of their homes, the men of the frontier organized themselves into armed bands, and soon began to make reprisals that were both silly and cruel, inasmuch as they fell upon the wrong persons. The principal headquarters of these frontier companies was at Paxton, a small town on the east bank of the Susquehanna; and their first memorable exploit was the sack of Conestoga, a village of friendly Indians of Iroquois lineage, who had some time since undergone a transformation from scalp-hunting savages into half-civilized vagabonds, and had in no way molested the English settlers. This out-



rage called forth a proclamation from the governor, condemning the act and offering a reward for the apprehension of the persons concerned in it, while the survivors of the Conestoga massacre were hurried to Lancaster, and lodged in the jail there to get them out of harm's way. The Paxton men, greatly incensed at what they considered the hostile action of the Quaker government, and determined not to be balked of their prey, galloped into Lancaster, broke into the jail, and murdered all the Indians who were sheltered there. In the rural districts these deeds were generally excused as the acts of men goaded to desperation by unutterable wrongs; but in the cultivated Quaker society of Philadelphia they were regarded with horror, and contentions arose which were embittered by theological prejudice, since the Paxton men were mostly Presbyterians of Scotch-Irish ancestry, and boldly justified their conduct by texts from the Old Testament. As the excitement increased, the Paxton men, to the number of a thousand, marched on Philadelphia, with intent to overawe the government and to wreak their vengeance on an innocent party of Christian Indians who were quartered on an island a little below the city. There was great alarm in the city, but when the rioters arrived at Germantown, they saw that to capture Philadelphia would far exceed their powers; and they listened to the wise counsel of Franklin, who advised them to go home and guard the troubled frontier, a task for which none were better fitted than they. The danger of civil strife being thus averted, the flame of controversy burned itself out in a harmless pamphlet war, in which Quakers and Presbyterians heaped argument and ridicule upon each other to their heart's

content. Meanwhile, at Bushy Run, in the Alleghanies, Henry Bouquet won the fiercest battle ever fought between white men and Indians; and in the course of the next year he made his way far into the Ohio country, and completely humbled the Shawnees and Delawares, so that they were fain to sue for peace. This campaign wrought the ruin of the great Indian conspiracy. The Senecas were browbeaten by Johnson, the French refused to lend any assistance, and finally Pontiac, after giving in his submission, was murdered in the woods at Cahokia, near St. Louis. Useless butchery was all that ever came of his deep-laid scheme, as it is all that has ever come of most Indian schemes; but the "Conspiracy of Pontiac" is worth remembering as a natural sequel of the great French war, as the most serious attempt ever made by the Indians to assert themselves against white men, and as the theme of one of the most brilliant and fascinating books that has ever been written by any historian since the days of Herodotus.

The Seven Years' War did not come to an end until Spain, afraid for her possessions in the East and West Indies, had taken up arms on the side of France. She thus invited the catastrophe which she dreaded, for in 1762 England conquered Cuba and the Philippine Islands. At the definitive treaty of peace, known as the peace of Paris, and signed in February, 1763, England gave back Cuba and the Philippine Islands to Spain in exchange for Florida. To indemnify Spain for this loss of Florida, incurred through her alliance with France, the latter power ceded to Spain the town of New Orleans and all of Louisiana west of the Mississippi — a vast and ill-defined region, as

thoroughly unknown at that day as Australia or Central Africa. From 1763 until 1803 New Orleans and St. Louis were accordingly governed by Spaniards. In 1803 this vast region was ceded by Spain to Bonaparte, who sold it to the United States for fifteen million dollars. Florida, on the other hand, was returned to Spain by England at the close of the Revolutionary War, and was afterward, in 1819, bought from Spain by the United States.

All of Louisiana east of the Mississippi except New Orleans, and all of Canada, were at the peace of Paris surrendered to England, so that not a rood of land in all North America remained to France. France also renounced all claim upon India, and it went without saying that England, and not France, was now to be mistress of the sea.

It may be said of the treaty of Paris that no other treaty ever transferred such an immense portion of the earth's surface from one nation to another. But such a statement, after all, gives no adequate idea of the enormous results which the genius of English liberty had for ages been preparing, and which had now found definite expression in the policy of William Pitt. The 10th of February, 1763, might not unfitly be celebrated as the proudest day in the history of England. For on that day it was made clear—had any one had eyes to discern the future, and read between the lines of this portentous treaty—that she was destined to become the revered mother of many free and enlightened nations, all speaking the matchless language which the English Bible has forever consecrated, and earnest in carrying out the sacred ideas for which Latimer suffered and Hampden fought. It was pro-

claimed on that day that the institutions of the Roman Empire, however useful in their time, were at last outgrown and superseded, and that the guidance of the world was henceforth to be, not in the hands of imperial bureaus or papal conclaves, but in the hands of the representatives of honest labour and the preachers of righteousness, unhampered by ritual or dogma. The independence of the United States was the first great lesson which was drawn from this solemn proclamation. Our own history is to-day the first extended commentary which is gradually unfolding to men's minds the latent significance of the compact by which the vanquished Old Régime of France renounced its pretensions to guide the world. In days to come, the lesson will be taken up and reiterated by other great communities planted by England, in Africa, in Australia, and the islands of the Pacific, until barbarous sacerdotalism and despotic privilege shall have vanished from the face of the earth, and the principles of Protestantism, rightly understood, and of English self-government, shall have become forever the undisputed possession of all mankind.

IV

CONNECTICUT'S INFLUENCE ON THE  
FEDERAL CONSTITUTION





## IV

### CONNECTICUT'S INFLUENCE ON THE FEDERAL CONSTITUTION

CONNECTICUT'S influence on the first beginnings and final establishment of our Federal government has attracted little attention; and this is but one among many instances of the fact that a really intelligent and fruitful study of American history is only an affair of yesterday.

It is surprising to think how little attention was paid to the subject half a century ago. I believe that, as schoolboys, we did learn something about some of the battles in the War of Independence, and two or three of the sea-fights of the years 1812-1815; but our knowledge of earlier times was limited to dim notions about Captain John Smith and the Pilgrim Fathers, while now and then perhaps there flitted across our minds the figures of Putnam and the wolf or a witch or two swinging from the gallows in Salem village, or the painted Indians rushing with wild war-whoop into Schenectady. Small pains were taken to teach us the significance of things that had happened at our very doors. I was myself a native of Hartford, yet long after Plymouth Rock had come to mean something to me, the names of Thomas Hooker and Samuel Stone fell upon my ears as mere empty sound. Much as we were given to bragging, in Fourth of July speeches, on our fine and mighty

qualities, we were modestly unconscious of the fact that some of our early worthies were personages as interesting and memorable as their brethren who fought the Lord's battles under Cromwell. In those days when our great historian, Francis Parkman, published his first work, the fascinating book which described the conspiracy of Pontiac, the greater part of the first edition lay for years untouched on the publishers' shelves, and one of the author's friends said to him: "Parkman, why don't you take some European subject,—something that people will be interested in? Why don't you write about the times of Michael Angelo, or the Wars of the Roses, or the age of Louis XIV.? Nobody cares to read about what happened out here in the woods a hundred years ago." Parkman's reply was like Luther's on a greater occasion, "I do what I do because I cannot do otherwise." That was, of course, the answer of the inspired man marked out by destiny for a needed work.

An incident which occurred in my own experience more than twenty years ago has not yet lost for me its ludicrous flavour. A gentleman in a small New England town was asked if some lectures of mine on "America's Place in History" would be likely to find a good audience there. He reflected for a moment, then shook his head gravely. "The subject," said he, "is one which would interest very few people." In the state of mind thus indicated there is something so bewildering that I believe I have not yet recovered from it.

During the past twenty years, however, the interest in American history has been at once increasing and growing enlightened. Every year finds a greater number of people directing their attention to the

subject, and directing it in a more intelligent way. Twenty years ago the Johns Hopkins University set the example of publishing a monthly series of pamphlets setting forth the results of special research upon topics that had either escaped attention or been very inadequately treated. One paper would discuss the functions of constables in New England in the early days; another would inquire into the causes of the piracy that infested our coasts at the end of the seventeenth century; another would make the history of town and county government in Illinois as absorbing as a novel; another would treat of old Maryland manors, another of the influence of Quakers upon antislavery sentiment in North Carolina, and so on. Many of the writers of these papers, trained in the best methods of historical study, have become professors of history in our colleges from one end of the Union to the other, and are sowing good seed where they go; while other colleges have begun to follow the example thus set. From Harvard and Columbia and the Universities of Wisconsin and Nebraska come especially notable contributions to our study each year. In Kentucky a Filson Club investigates the early overflow of our population across the Alleghanies; in Milwaukee a Parkman Club discusses questions raised by the books of that great writer, while books long forgotten or never before printed are now made generally accessible. Thus the Putnams of New York are bringing out ably edited sets of the writings of the men who founded this republic. Thus Dr. Coues has clothed with fresh life the journals and letters of the great explorers who opened up our Pacific country; while a crowning achievement has been the publication in Cleveland,

Ohio, of the seventy-three volumes of Jesuit Relations written during two centuries by missionaries in North America to their superiors in France or Italy. Such things speak eloquently of the change that has come over us. They show that while we can still draw lessons from the Roman Forum and the Frankish Field-of-March, we have awakened to the fact that the New England town-meeting also has its historic lessons.

Now when we come to the early history of Connecticut and consider the circumstances under which it was founded, we are soon impressed with the unusual significance and importance of every step in the story. We are soon brought to see that the secession of the three river towns from Massachusetts was an event no less memorable than the voyage of the *Mayflower* or the arrival of Winthrop's great colony in Massachusetts Bay. In order to appreciate its significance, we may begin by pointing out one very marked and noticeable peculiarity of the early arrangement and distribution of population in New England. It formed a great contrast to what occurred in Virginia. The decisive circumstance which insured the success of the Virginia colony after its early period of distress sometimes reaching despair, was the growing European demand for tobacco. The commercial basis of Old Virginia's existence was the exportation of tobacco raised upon large estates along the bank of the James and neighbouring rivers. Now we find that colony growing steadily inland in a compact mass presenting a united front against the wilderness and its denizens. We do not find a few settlements on James River, a few on the Rappahannock, and another group perhaps at Lynchburg, quite out of military supporting distance

of each other; in other words, we do not find a group of distinct communities, but we find one little state, the further development of which might make a great state, as it did, but could never make a federation of states. If we look at such a colony as Pennsylvania, where Church and State were from the outset completely separated, quite as much as in Rhode Island, we find a similar compactness of growth; we find the colony presenting to the wilderness a solid front. If we next consider New Netherland, we notice a slight difference. There we find a compact colony with its centre on Manhattan Island, and far up the river another settlement at Albany quite beyond easy supporting distance and apparently exposed to all the perils of the wilderness. But this settlement of Albany is readily explained, for there was the powerful incentive of the rich fur trade, while the perils of the wilderness were in great measure eliminated by the firm alliance between Dutchmen and Mohawks.

Now when we come to the settlement of New England, we find things going very differently. Had the Puritan settlers behaved like most other colonists, their little state, beginning on the shores of Massachusetts Bay, would have grown steadily and compactly westward, pushing the Indians before it. First, it would have brushed away the Wampanoags and Naticks; then the Narragansetts and Nipmucks would have succumbed to them, and in due course of time they would have reached the country of the Pequots and Mohegans. That would have been like the growth of Virginia. It would have been a colonial growth of the ordinary type and it would have resulted in a single New England state, not in a group bearing that name.



Very different from this was the actual course of events. Instead of this solid growth, we find within the first ten years after Winthrop's arrival in Massachusetts Bay that while his colony was still in the weakness of infancy, even while its chief poverty, as John Cotton said, was poverty in men, the new arrivals instead of reinforcing it, marched off into the wilderness, heedless of danger, and formed new colonies for themselves. This phenomenon is so singular as to demand explanation, and the explanation is not far to seek. We shall find it in the guiding purpose which led the Puritans of that day to cross the ocean in quest of new homes.

What was that guiding purpose? This is a subject upon which cheap moralizing has abounded. We have been told that the Puritans came to New England in search of religious liberty, and that with reprehensible want of consistency, they proceeded to trample upon religious liberty as ruthlessly as any of the churches that had been left behind in the old world. We often hear it said that Mrs. Hemans laboured under a fond delusion when she wrote

"They have left unstained what there they found,  
Freedom to worship God."

By no means! cry the modern critics of the Puritans; their record in respect of religious freedom was as far as possible from stainless. From much of the modern writing on this well-worn theme one would almost suppose that religious bigotry had never existed in the world until the settlement of New England; one would almost be led to fancy that racks and thumb-screws and the stake had never been heard of.



Now the difficulty with this sort of historic criticism is that it deals too much in vague generalities and quite overlooks the fact that there were Puritans and Puritans, that the God-fearing men of that stripe were not all cast in the same mould, like Professor Clerk Maxwell's atoms. I have more than once heard people allude to the restriction of the suffrage to church members in the early days of Massachusetts and Connecticut, which is very much as if one were to make statements about the despotic government of Czar Nicholas and Queen Victoria. Still more frequently do people confound the men of Plymouth with the very different company that founded Boston. As to Mrs. Hemans, her remark was not so very far from the truth if restricted to the colony of the Pilgrims, about which she was writing. On the whole, the purpose of that little band of Pilgrims was to secure freedom to worship after their own fashion, and similar freedom they were measurably ready to accord to those who came among them. They had witnessed in Holland the good effects of religious liberty, and their attitude of mind was largely determined by the strong personal qualities of such men as John Robinson, William Bradford, and Edward Winslow, who were all noted for breadth, gentleness, and tact. The record of Plymouth is not quite unstained by persecution, but it is an eminently good one for the seventeenth century; the cases are few and by no means flagrant.

With the colony of Massachusetts Bay the circumstances were entirely different. That colony was at the outset a commercial company, like the great company which founded Virginia and afterward had such an interesting struggle with James I., ending in the loss

of the Virginia Company's charter and its destruction as a political body. This fate served as a warning five years later to the Massachusetts Bay Company. Instead of staying in London where hostile courts and the means of enforcing their hostile decrees were too near at hand, they decided to carry their charter across the ocean and carry out their cherished purposes as far removed as possible from interference. Their commercial aims were but a cloak to cover the purpose they had most at heart, — a purpose which could not be avowed by any party of men seeking for a royal charter. Their purpose was to found a theocratic commonwealth, like that of the children of Israel in the good old days before their froward hearts conceived the desire for a king. There was no thought of throwing off allegiance to the British crown; but saving such allegiance, their purpose was to build up a theocratic society according to their own notions, and not for one moment did they propose to tolerate among them any persons whom they deemed unfit or unwilling to coöperate with them in their scheme. As for religious toleration, they scouted the very idea of the thing. There was no imputation which they resented more warmly than the imputation of treating heretics cordially, as they were treated in the Netherlands. The writings of Massachusetts men in the seventeenth century leave no possibility of doubt on this point. John Cotton was not a man of persecuting temperament, but of religious liberty he had a very one-sided conception. According to Cotton, it is wrong for error to persecute truth, but it is the sacred duty of truth to persecute error. Which reminds one of the Hottentot chief's fine ethical distinction between right

and wrong: "Wrong is when somebody runs off with my wife; right is when I run off with some other fellow's wife." As for Nathaniel Ward, the "Simple Cobbler of Agawam," he tells us that there are people in the world who say, "that men ought to have liberty of their conscience, and that it is persecution to debar them of it." And what answer has the Simple Cobbler to make? He is for the moment struck dumb. He declares, "I can rather stand amazed than reply to this; it is an astonishment to think that the brains of men should be parboiled in such impious ignorance; let all the wits under the heavens lay their heads together and find an assertion worse than this . . . and I will petition to be chosen the universal idiot of the world." The reverend gentleman who writes in this pungent style was the person who drew up the first code adopted in Massachusetts, the code which is known as its "Body of Liberties." One and all, these men who shaped the policy of Massachusetts would have echoed with approval the sentiment of the Scottish divine, Rutherford, who declared that toleration of all religions is not far removed from blasphemy. Holding such opinions, they resented the imputation of tolerance in much the same spirit as that in which most members of the Republican party in the years just preceding our Civil War resented the imputation of being Abolitionists.

While the founders of Massachusetts thus stoutly opposed religious liberty their opinions did not bear their worst fruits until after the middle of the century, when men of persecuting temperament like Norton and Endicott acquired control. In the earlier years the fiery zeal of such men as Wilson and Dudley was

tempered by the fine tact and moderation of Winthrop and Cotton. Winthrop's view of such matters was interesting and suggestive. In substance it was as follows: Here we are in the wilderness, a band of exiles who have given up all the comforts of our old homes, all the tender associations of the land we love best, in order to found a state according to a preconceived ideal in which most of us agree. We believe it to be important that the members of a Christian commonwealth should all hold the same opinions regarding essentials, and of course it is for us to determine what are essentials. If people who have come here with us hold different views, they have made a great mistake and had better go back to England. But if, holding different views, they still wish to remain in America, let them leave us in peace, and going elsewhere, found communities according to their conceptions of what is best. We do not wish to quarrel with them, but we will tell them plainly that they cannot stay here. Is there not, in this vast wilderness, enough elbow-room for many God-fearing communities?

It was in accordance with this policy that when the first Congregational church was organized at Salem, two gentlemen who disapproved of the proceedings were sent on board ship and carried back to England. And again, when profound offence had been taken at certain things said by Roger Williams and there was some talk of sending him to England, he was privately notified by Winthrop that if he would retire to some place beyond the Company's jurisdiction, such as Narragansett Bay, he need not fear molestation. This was virtually banishment, though not so sharp and harsh as that which was visited upon

Mrs. Hutchinson and her friends after their conviction of heresy by a tribunal sitting in what is now Cambridge. Some of these heretics led by John Wheelwright went northward to the Piscataqua country. At the mouth of that romantic stream the Episcopal followers of Mason and Gorges had lately founded the town of Portsmouth, and Wheelwright's people, in settling Exeter and Hampton, found these Episcopalians much pleasanter neighbours than they had left in Boston. As for Mrs. Hutchinson and her remaining friends, they found new homes upon Rhode Island. A few years later that eccentric agitator, Samuel Gorton, whom neither Plymouth nor even Providence nor Rhode Island could endure, bought land for himself on the western shore of Narragansett Bay and made the beginnings of Warwick.

From these examples we see that the principal cause of the scattering of New England settlers in communities somewhat remote from each other was inability to agree on sundry questions pertaining to religion. It should be observed in passing that their differences of opinion seldom related to points of doctrine, but almost always to points of church government or religious discipline. For the most part they were questions on the borderland between theology and politics. Between the settlements here mentioned the differences were strongly marked. While Winthrop's followers insisted upon the union of Church and State, those of Roger Williams insisted upon their complete separation. The divergences of the New Hampshire people and those of the Newport colony had somewhat more of a doctrinal complexion, being implicated with sundry speculations as to salvation by grace and salvation



by works. These examples have prepared us to understand the case of Connecticut. The secession which gave rise to Connecticut was attended by no such stormy scenes as were witnessed at the banishment of Wheelwright and Mrs. Hutchinson, yet it included a greater number of elements of historic significance and was in many ways the most important and remarkable of the instances of segmentation which occurred in early New England.

When the charter of the Massachusetts Company was brought to the western shore of the Atlantic, the mere fact of separation from England sufficed to transmute the commercial corporation into a self-governing republic. The company had its governor, its deputy-governor, and its council of eighteen assistants, as was commonly the case with commercial joint-stock companies. In London this governing board would have exercised almost autocratic control over the transactions of the company, although politically it would have remained a body unknown to law, however much influence it might have exerted. But on American soil the company at once became a political body, and its governor, deputy-governor, and assistants became the ruling head of a small republic consisting of the company's settlers in Salem, Charlestown, Boston, Roxbury, Dorchester, Watertown, and a little group of houses halfway between Watertown and Boston and known for a while simply as the New Town. This designation indicated its comparative youth; it was about a year younger than its sister towns! Nothing was said in the charter about a popular representative assembly, and at first the government did not feel the need of one. They were men of strong characters,



who knew what they wanted and intended to have it. They had selected the New Town for a seat of government, since it was somewhat less exposed to destruction from a British fleet than Boston; and these men were doing things well calculated to arouse the ire of King Charles. They felt themselves quite competent to sit in the New Town and make laws which should be binding upon all the neighbouring settlements. But they soon received a reminder that such was not the way in which freeborn Englishmen like to be treated. In 1631 the governor, deputy-governor, and assistants decided that on its western side the New Town was too much exposed to attacks from Indians. Accordingly, it was voted that a palisade should be built extending about half a mile inland from Charles River, and a tax was assessed upon the towns to meet the expense of this fortification. The men of Watertown flatly refused to pay their share of this tax because they were not represented in the body which imposed it. These proceedings were followed by a great primary assembly of all the settlers competent to vote and it was decided that hereafter each town should send representatives to a general assembly, the assent of which should be necessary to all the acts of the governor and his council. Thus was inaugurated the second free republican government of America, the first having been inaugurated in Virginia thirteen years before, and both having been copied from the county government of England in the old English county court.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "The experiment of federalism is not a new one. The Greeks applied to it their supple and inventive genius with many interesting results, but they failed because the only kind of popular government they knew was the town-meeting; and of course you cannot bring together forty or fifty town-meetings from different points of the compass to some common centre

The protest of the Watertown men gave expression to a feeling that had many sympathizers in Dorchester and the New Town. For some reason these three towns happened to contain a considerable proportion of persons not fully in sympathy with the aims of Winthrop and Cotton and the other great leaders of the Puritan exodus. In the theocratic state which these leaders were attempting to found, one of the corner-stones, perhaps the chiefest corner-stone, was the restriction of the rights of voting and holding civil office to members of the Congregational Church qualified for participation in the Lord's Supper. The ruling party in Massachusetts Bay believed that this restriction was necessary in order to guard against hidden foes and to assure sufficient power to the clergy; but there were some who felt that the restriction would give to the clergy more power than was likely to be wisely used, and that its tendency was distinctly aristocratic. The minority which held these democratic views was more strongly represented in Dorchester, Watertown, and the New Town than elsewhere. Here, too, the jealousy of encroachments upon local self-government was especially strong, as illustrated in the protest of Watertown above mentioned. It is also a significant fact that in 1633

to carry on the work of government by discussion. But our forefathers under King Alfred, a thousand years ago, were familiar with a device which it had never entered into the mind of Greek or Roman to conceive: they sent from each township a couple of esteemed men to be its representatives in the county court. Here was an institution that admitted of indefinite expansion. That old English county court is now seen to have been the parent of all modern popular legislatures." [This and the succeeding notes are quoted from an address delivered by Dr. Fiske, October 10, 1901, at the two hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the founding of Middletown.]

Watertown and Dorchester led the way in instituting town government by selectmen.

In September, 1633, there arrived upon the scene several interesting men, three of whom call for special mention. These were John Haynes, Samuel Stone, and Thomas Hooker. Haynes was born in Copford Hall, Essex, but the date of his birth is unknown, and the same may be said of the details of his early life. He is now remembered as the first governor of Connecticut and as having served in that capacity every alternate year until his death. He has been described as a man "of large estate and larger affections; of heavenly mind and spotless life, sagacious, accurate, and dear to the people by his benevolent virtues and disinterested conduct." Samuel Stone was born in Hertford in 1602, and was graduated at Emmanuel College, Cambridge, in 1627, being already known as a shrewd and tough controversialist, abounding in genial humour and sometimes sparkling with wit. Thomas Hooker was an older man, having been born in Markfield, Leicestershire, in 1586. He was graduated at Emmanuel College, Cambridge, and afterward became a fellow of that College. In 1626 he was appointed assistant to a clergyman in Chelmsford and preached there, but in 1630 was forbidden to preach by Archbishop Laud. For a while Hooker stayed in his home near Chelmsford and taught a school in Little Braddon, where he had for an assistant teacher John Eliot, afterward famous as the apostle to the Indians. This lasted but a few months. Things were made so disagreeable for Hooker that before the end of 1630 he made his way to Holland and stayed there until 1633, preaching in Rotterdam and Delft.

At length, in the summer of 1633, he decided to go to New England and sailed in the good ship *Griffin*. In the same ship came Haynes and Stone, and upon their arrival in Massachusetts Bay all three established themselves at the New Town, which was soon to be called Cambridge. In the preceding year a congregation from Braintree in Essex had come over to Massachusetts and begun to settle near Mount Wollaston, where they left the name of Braintree on the map; but presently they removed to the New Town, where their accession raised the population to something like five hundred souls. Hooker, upon his arrival, was chosen pastor and Stone was chosen teacher of the New Town church.

During the ensuing year expressions of dissent from the prevailing policy began to be heard more distinctly than before in the New Town. Among the questions which then agitated the community was one which concerned the form which legislation should take. Many of the people expressed a wish that a code of laws might be drawn up, inasmuch as they naturally wished to know what was to be expected of law-abiding citizens; but the general disposition of the ministers was to withstand such requests and to keep things undecided until a body of law should grow up through the decisions of courts in which the ministers themselves played a leading part. The controversy over this question was kept up until 1647, when the popular party, if we may so call it, carried the day, and caused a code of law to be framed. This code, of which Nathaniel Ward was the draughtsman, was known as the Body of Liberties. In all this prolonged discussion the representative assembly was more or less

opposed by the council of assistants. In short, there was a very clear division in Massachusetts between what we may call the aristocratic and democratic parties. Perhaps it would also be correct to distinguish them as the theocratic and secular parties. On the one side were the clergymen and aristocrats who wished to make political power the monopoly of a few, while on the other hand a considerable minority of the people wished to secularize the politics of the community and place it upon a broader basis. The foremost spokesmen of these two parties were the two great ministers, John Cotton and Thomas Hooker. Both were men of force, sagacity, tact, and learning. They were probably the two most powerful intellects to be found on Massachusetts Bay. Their opinions were clearly expressed. Hooker said, "In matters of greater consequence, which concern the common good, a general council, chosen by all, to transact businesses which concern all, I conceive, under favour, most suitable to rule and most safe for relief of the whole." Here we have one of the fundamental theorems of democracy stated in admirably temperate language. On the other hand, Cotton said, "Democracy I do not conceive that ever God did ordain as a fit government either for church or commonwealth." Hooker also had more or less discussion with Winthrop, in which it appeared that the ideal of the former was government of the people by the people, while that of the latter was government of the people by a selected few.

Among the principal adherents of Hooker were John Warham, the pastor, and John Maverick, the teacher, of Dorchester, both of them natives of Exeter



in Devonshire. There was also George Phillips, a graduate of Cambridge, who had since 1630 been pastor of the church at Watertown. Another adherent was Roger Ludlow of Dorchester, a brother-in-law of Endicott. Ludlow had been trained for the bar and was one of the most acute and learned of the Puritan settlers. The vicissitudes of his life might perhaps raise a suspicion that wherever there was a government, he was "agin it." At all events, he was conspicuous in opposition at the time of which we are speaking.

By 1635 many reports had come to Boston of the beautiful smiling fields along the Connecticut River. Attention had been called to the site of Hartford, because here the Dutch had built a rude blockhouse and exchanged defiances with boats from Plymouth coming up the river. At the river's mouth the Saybrook fort, lately founded, served to cut off the Dutch fortress of Good Hope from its supports on the Hudson River, and all the rest of what is now Connecticut was rough and shaggy woodland. All at once it appeared that in the congregations of Dorchester, Watertown, and the New Town, a strong desire had sprung up of migrating to the banks of the Connecticut. There was no unseemly controversy, as in the cases of Roger Williams and Mrs. Hutchinson. This case was not parallel to theirs, for Hooker was no heresiarch and Massachusetts was most anxious to keep him and his friends. To lose three large congregations would but aggravate its complaint of poverty in men. Moreover, antagonists like Hooker and Cotton knew how to be courteous. When the discontented congregations petitioned the General Court for leave to with-



draw from the neighbourhood, the reasons which they alleged were so ludicrous as to make it plain that they were merely set forth as pretexts to do duty instead of the real reasons. It was alleged, for example, that they had not room enough to pasture their cattle. The men who said this must have had to hold their sides to keep from bursting with laughter. Not enough room in Cambridge for five hundred people to feed their cattle! Why, then, did they not simply send a swarm into the adjacent territory, — into what was by and by to be parcelled out as Lexington and Concord and Acton? Why flit a hundred miles through the wilderness and seek an isolated position open to attack from many quarters? It is impossible to read the fragmentary records without seeing that the weighty questions were kept back; but there is one telltale fact which is worth reams of written description. In the state which these men went away and founded on the banks of our noble river there was no limitation of the suffrage to members of the churches. In words of perfect courtesy the ministers and magistrates of Boston deprecated the removal of a light-giving candlestick, but the candlestick could not be prevailed on to stay, and the leave so persistently sought was reluctantly granted.

A wholesale migration ensued. About eight hundred persons made their way through the forest to their new homes on the farther bank of the Connecticut River. The Dorchester congregation made the settlement which they called at first by the same name, but presently changed it to Windsor. The men from Watertown built a new Watertown lower down, which was presently rechristened Wethersfield; and between them

the congregation from the New Town, led by its pastor and teacher, halted near the Dutch fort and called their settlement Hartford, after Stone's English birthplace. About half of the migration seems to have come to Hartford, and the wholesale character of it may be best appreciated when we learn that of the five hundred inhabitants of Cambridge at the beginning of the year, only fifty were left at the end of it. Truly, our good city on the Charles was well-nigh depopulated. A great many empty houses would have been consigned to decay but for one happy circumstance. Just as Hooker's people were leaving, a new congregation from England was arriving. These were the learned Thomas Shepard and his people. They needed homes, of course, and the houses of the seceders were to be had at reasonable prices. I cannot refrain from mentioning, before taking my departure from this part of the subject with the seceders, that Shepard's people were much more in harmony with the Massachusetts theocracy than their predecessors. Indeed, when in that very year it was decided that the colony must have a college, it was further decided to place it in the New Town where its students and professors might sit under the preaching of Mr. Shepard, a man so acute and diligent in detecting and eradicating heresy that it could by no possibility acquire headway in his neighbourhood. Thus Harvard College was founded by graduates of the ancient university on the Cam; and thus did the New Town at last acquire its name of Cambridge. But alas for human foresight! The first president that Harvard had was expelled from his place for teaching heresy, being neither more nor less than a disbeliever in the propriety of infant baptism!

At first the seceders said nothing about escaping from the jurisdiction of Massachusetts, and indeed, the permission granted to the Watertown congregation expressly provided that in their new home they should remain a part of that commonwealth. What Hooker and his friends may have at first intended we do not really know. One thing is clear: they waited until their new homes were built before they took the great question of government in hand. At about the same time a party from Roxbury migrated westward and founded Springfield higher up the river. Their leader, William Pynchon, was more than once in very bad repute with the people of Boston; and some years later he published in London a treatise on the Atonement, which our Boston friends solemnly burned in the market-place by order of the General Court.

For a couple of years the affairs of Windsor, Hartford, and Wethersfield were managed by a commission from Massachusetts in which William Pynchon and Roger Ludlow were the leading spirits. There was a difference in the position of Springfield and the three lower towns with reference to the government in Boston. The charter of the Massachusetts Company granted it a broad strip of land running indefinitely westward. With the imperfect geographical knowledge of that time and in the entire absence of surveys, it was possible for Massachusetts to claim Springfield as situated within her original grant. No such claim, however, was possible in the case of the three lower towns.<sup>1</sup> Latitude settled the business for them to the

<sup>1</sup> "The new towns, Windsor, Hartford, and Wethersfield, were indisputably outside of the jurisdiction of Massachusetts in so far as grants from the crown could go."

satisfaction of anybody who could use a sextant. If they chose to set up for themselves, Massachusetts could find no reasonable ground upon which to oppose them. Moreover, it was distinctly bad policy for Massachusetts to be too exigent in such a matter, or to make the Connecticut seceders her enemies. Massachusetts was playing a part of extraordinary boldness with reference to the British government. It took all the skill and resources of one of the most daring and sagacious statesmen that ever lived (and such John Winthrop certainly was) to steer that ship safely among the breakers that threatened her, and to quarrel with such worthy friends as the men of Connecticut, except for some most imperative and flagrant cause, would be the height of folly.

Thus left quite free to act for themselves, the three river towns almost from the beginning behaved as an independent community. In May, 1637, a legislature called a General Court was assembled at Hartford. A committee of three from each town, meeting at Hartford, elected six magistrates and administered to them an oath of office. The government thus established superseded the commission from Massachusetts, and it is worth noting that it derived its authority directly from the three towns. In the nine deputies we have the germ of the representative assembly, and in the six elected magistrates we have the analogue of the Massachusetts council of assistants.

The relations of the towns, however, needed better definition, and on the 14th of January, 1639, a convention met at Hartford which framed and adopted a written constitution, creating the commonwealth of Connecticut. The name of this written constitution

was "The Fundamental Orders of Connecticut."<sup>1</sup> These Orders, as already observed, placed no ecclesiastical restrictions upon the suffrage, but gave it to all admitted freemen who had taken the oath of fidelity to the commonwealth; and lest there should be any doubt who were to be regarded as admitted freemen, the General Court afterward declared that the phrase meant all who had been admitted by a town. From this it appears that in Connecticut the towns were the original sources of power, just as in our great federal republic the original sources of power are the states. It was perfectly well understood that each town was absolutely self-governing in all that related to its own local affairs, and that all powers not expressly conferred upon the General Court by these Fundamental Orders remained with the town. One express direction to the towns reminds one of the provision in our Federal Constitution that it shall guarantee to each state a republican form of government. In like manner the Fundamental Orders provide that each town shall choose a number of its inhabitants not exceeding seven to administer its affairs from year to year. With regard to the General Court, it was ordered that each town should send four deputies to represent it until the number of towns should so increase that this rule would make an assembly inconveniently large, in which case the num-

<sup>1</sup> "This was the first instance known to history in which a commonwealth was created in such a way. Much eloquence has been expended over the compact drawn up and signed by the Pilgrims in the cabin of the *Mayflower*, and that is certainly an admirable document; but it is not a constitution; it does not lay down the lines upon which a government is to be constructed. It is simply a promise to be good and to obey the laws. On the other hand, the 'Fundamental Orders of Connecticut' summon into existence a state government which is, with strict limitations, paramount over the local governments of the three towns, its creators."



ber for each town might be reduced. The noticeable feature is that the towns were to be equally represented, without regard to their population. This feature gives a distinctly federal character to this remarkable constitution. In the face of this fact it cannot well be denied that the original Connecticut was a federation of towns. A careful and detailed study of the history of the two states would further convince us that the town has always had more importance in Connecticut than in Massachusetts.

With regard to the governor, there was to be a system of popular election without any preliminary nomination. An election was to be held each year in the spring, at which every freeman was entitled to hand to the proper persons a paper containing the name of the person whom he desired for governor. The papers were then counted and the name which was found on the greatest number of ballots was declared elected. Here we have the popular election by a simple plurality vote. As for the six magistrates, the deputies from each town in the General Court might nominate two candidates, and the court as a whole might nominate as many more as it liked. This nomination was not to be acted upon until the next or some subsequent meeting of the Court. When the time came for choosing six, the secretary read the names of the candidates, and in the case of each candidate every freeman was to bring in a written ballot which signified a vote in his favour, and a blank ballot which was equivalent to a black-ball, and he who had more votes than black-balls was chosen.

Into the details of this constitution I need not go, but may dismiss it with a few general remarks.



In the first place, *it was the first written constitution known to history that created a government.*

*Secondly, it makes no allusion to any sovereign beyond seas, nor to any source of authority whatever except the three towns themselves.*

*Thirdly, it created a state which was really a tiny federal republic, and it recognized the principle of federal equality by equality of representation among the towns, while at the same time it recognized popular sovereignty by electing its governor and its Upper House by a plurality vote.*

*Fourthly, let me repeat, it conferred upon the General Court only such powers as were expressly granted. In these peculiarities we may see how largely it served as a precedent for the Constitution of the United States.*<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "This is not the place for inquiring into the origin of written constitutions. Their precursors in a certain sense were the charters of mediæval towns, and such documents as the Great Charter of 1215 by which the English sovereign was bound to respect sundry rights and liberties of his people. Our colonial charters were in a sense constitutions, and laws that infringed them could be set aside by the courts. By rare good fortune, aided by the consummate tact of the younger Winthrop, Connecticut obtained in 1662 such a charter, which confirmed her in the possession of her liberties. But these charters were always, in form at least, a grant of privileges from an overlord to a vassal, something given or bartered by a superior to an inferior. With the constitution which created Connecticut it was quite otherwise. You may read its eleven articles from beginning to end, and not learn from it that there was ever such a country as England or such a personage as the British sovereign. It is purely a contract, in accordance with which we the people of these three river towns propose to conduct our public affairs. Here is the form of government which commends itself to our judgment, and we hereby agree to obey it while we reserve the right to amend it. Unlike the Declaration of Independence, this document contains no theoretical phrases about liberty and equality, and it is all the more impressive for their absence. It does not deem it necessary to insist upon political freedom and upon equality before the law, but it takes them for granted and proceeds at once to business. Surely

But it was not only in the league of the three river towns that the principles of town autonomy and federation were asserted. Let us turn aside for a moment and consider some of the circumstances under which the sister colony of New Haven was founded. The headlong overthrow of the Pequots in the spring of 1637 and the pursuit of the fugitive remnant of the tribe had made New England settlers acquainted with the beautiful shores of Long Island Sound. Just at that time a new company arrived in Boston from England. The general purpose of these newcomers was nearly identical with that of the magistrates in Boston. They desired a theocratic government of aristocratic type in which the clergy and magistrates should possess the chief share of power, and they also, like the Boston clergy, were unwilling for the present to concede a definite code of laws. Why, then, did not this new party remain in the neighbourhood of Boston? They would have done much toward healing that complaint of poverty in men of which John Cotton spoke; and one would suppose moreover that after having recently suffered from so large a secession as that which founded the three river towns of Connecticut the Boston people would have been over-anxious to retain these newcomers in their neighbourhood. Nevertheless, it was amicably arranged that the new party, of which John Davenport and Theophilus Eaton were the leaders, should try its fortunes on the coast of Long Island Sound. Massachusetts colony of course had no authority to restrain them. If they chose to go outside the limits of the Massachusetts

this was the true birth of American democracy, and the Connecticut Valley was its birthplace!"

charter and thus be free at once from its restrictions and its protection, it was open to them to do so. What could have been their motive? The records of the time leave us in some doubt, but I suspect that they found the minority in Massachusetts too troublesome. There was a very considerable minority which disapproved of the theocratic policy, and although it had been weakened by the departure of the Connecticut men, yet it still remained troublesome and grew more so from year to year until after two generations it contributed to the violent overthrow of the Massachusetts charter. In the summer of 1637 the air of Boston was dense with complaints of theological and political strife, and one may believe that the autocratic Davenport preferred to try his fortunes in a new and untried direction. Not only was the Old World given over to the Man of Sin, but that uncomfortable personage had even allowed his claws and tail to make an appearance among the saints of Boston.

For such reasons, doubtless, the Davenport party came into the Sound and chose for their settlement the charming bay of Quinnipiac. They called their settlement New Haven, with a double meaning, as commemorating old English associations and as an earnest of the spiritual rest which they hoped to secure. In the course of the years 1638 and 1639 settlements were also made at Milford and Guilford and in 1640 at Stamford. Somewhat later the towns of Bramford and Southold on Long Island were added.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "In the eventful year 1639, Roger Ludlow, of Windsor, led a swarm to Fairfield, the settlement of which was soon followed by that of Stratford at the mouth of the Housatonic River. This forward movement separated Stamford from its sister towns of the New Haven republic. Then in 1644 Connecticut bought Saybrook from the representatives of the grantees, Lord

Now these infant towns did not at the first moment form themselves into a commonwealth, but they retained each its autonomy like the towns of ancient Greece, and each of these independent towns was little else than an independent congregation. All over New England the town was practically equivalent to the parish. In point of fact it was the English parish brought across the ocean and self-governing, without any subjection to a bishop. But nowhere perhaps was the identification of Church and State in the affairs of the town so complete as in these little communities on the banks of the Sound. In June of 1639, less than half a year after the constitution of Connecticut, the planters of New Haven held a meeting in Robert Newman's lately finished barn, and agreed upon a constitution for New Haven. Mr. Davenport began by preaching a sermon from the text "Wisdom hath builded her house; she hath hewn out her seven pillars." After the sermon six fundamental orders were submitted to the meeting and adopted by a show of hands. The general purport of these orders was that only church members could vote and hold office. Even in that gathering of saints such a rule would disfranchise many, and it was not adopted without some opposition. It was then provided that all the freemen (that is, church members) should

Saye and his friends, and in the next year a colony planted at the mouth of Pequot River was afterward called New London, and the name of the river was changed to Thames. Apparently Connecticut had an eye to the main chance, or, in modern parlance, to the keys of empire; at all events, she had no notion of being debarred from access to salt water, and while she seized the mouths of the three great rivers, she claimed the inheritance of the Pequots, including all the lands where that domineering tribe had ever exacted tribute."

choose twelve of their number as electors, and that these twelve should choose the seven magistrates who were to administer the affairs of the settlement. These magistrates were really equivalent to selectmen; they were known as pillars of the church. It was furthermore agreed that the Holy Scriptures contain perfect rules for the ordering of all affairs civil and domestic as well as ecclesiastical. So far was this principle applied that New Haven refused to have trial by jury because no such thing could be found in the Mosaic law. The assembling of freemen for an annual election was simply the meeting of church members to choose the twelve electors, while the rest of the people had nothing to say. It was therefore as far as possible from the system adopted by the three river towns. The constitution of Connecticut was democratic, that of New Haven aristocratic. Connecticut, moreover, at its beginning was a federation of towns; New Haven at its beginning was simply a group of towns juxtaposed but not confederated.

Nevertheless, circumstances soon drove the New Haven towns into federation, and here for a moment let us pause to consider how federation was inevitably involved in this whole process which we have been considering. We have seen that the principal reason why New England did not develop into a single solid state like Virginia or Pennsylvania, but into a congeries of scattered communities, was to be found in the slight but obstinate differences between different parties of settlers on questions mainly of church polity, sometimes of doctrine; and we must remember that the isolation of these communities was greater than we can easily realize, because our minds are liable to be



confused by the consolidation that has come since. There were three or four towns on the Piscataqua as a beginning for New Hampshire; there were ten or twelve towns about Boston harbour; two or three in Plymouth colony; two or three more on Rhode Island besides Roger Williams's plantation at Providence, and presently Gorton's at Warwick; then there was a lonely fortress at Saybrook; and lastly, the federation of Connecticut and the scattered molecules of New Haven. The first result of so much dispersal had been a deadly war with the Indians, and although the annihilation of the Pequots served as a dreadful warning to all red men, yet danger was everywhere so imminent as to make some kind of union necessary for bringing out in case of need the military strength of these scattered communities. Thus arose the famous New England confederation of 1643, in which Massachusetts, Plymouth, Connecticut, and New Haven united their fortunes.<sup>1</sup> Now when the question of forming this federation came up, New Haven could not very well afford to be left out. She possessed only the territory which she had bought from the Indians, while Connecticut, with an audacity like that of old world empires, claimed every rood of land the occupants of which had ever paid tribute to the extin-

<sup>1</sup> "This act of sovereignty was undertaken without any consultation with the British government or any reference to it. The Confederacy received a serious blow in 1662, when Charles II. annexed New Haven, without its consent, to Connecticut; but it had a most useful career still before it, for without the aid of a single British regiment or a single gold piece from the Stuart treasury, it carried New England through the frightful ordeal of King Philip's War, and came to an honoured end when it was forcibly displaced by the arbitrary rule of Andros. It would be difficult to overstate the importance of this New England federation as a preparatory training for the greater work of federation a century later."



guished Pequots. She was laying one finger upon the Thames River and another upon the Housatonic, while she sent parties of settlers to Fairfield and Stratford, thus curtailing and invading New Haven's natural limits. "In union there is strength," and so the towns of the New Haven colony united themselves into a little federal republic.

I need not pursue this subject, for I have said enough to indicate the points which concern us to-day. Let me only mention one interesting feature of the events which annexed aristocratic New Haven to her democratic neighbour. When I say aristocratic New Haven, I am not thinking of dress and furniture and worldly riches; yet it was a matter of comment that the New Haven leaders were wealthy, that panelled wainscots and costly rugs and curtains were seen in their houses when there was as yet nothing of that sort to be found in the three river towns, and that they were inclined to plume themselves upon possessing the visible refinements of life. The policy of their theocracy toward the British crown was very bold, like that of Massachusetts, but it was imprudent inasmuch as they were far from having the strength of the older colony. It is a thrilling story, that of the hunt for the regicides, and Davenport's defiant sermon on the occasion. It was magnificent, but it was not diplomacy. On the other hand, the policy of Connecticut at that time was shaped by a remarkable man, no less than John Winthrop, son of the great founder of Massachusetts, a man of vast accomplishments, scientific and literary, a fellow of the Royal Society. Inheriting much of his father's combination of audacity with velvet tact, he knew at once how to maintain the rights and claims of Connecticut and how to make

Charles II. think him the best fellow in the world. We have seen that in making her first constitution Connecticut did not so much as allude to the existence of a British government; but in the stormy times of the Restoration that sort of thing would no longer do. So the astute Winthrop sought and obtained a royal charter which simply gave Connecticut what she had already, namely, the government which she had formed for herself, and which was so satisfactorily republican that she did not need to revise it in 1776, but lived on with it well into the nineteenth century. This charter defined her territory in such a way as to include naughty New Haven, which was thus summarily annexed. And how did New Haven receive this? The disfranchised minority hailed the news with delight. The disgruntled theocrats in great part migrated to New Jersey, and the venerable Davenport went to end his days in Boston. Between New Haven and Boston the sympathy had always been strong. The junction with Connecticut was greatly facilitated by the exodus of malcontents to New Jersey, and it was not long before the whole of what is now Connecticut had grown together as an extensive republic composed of towns whose union presented in many respects a miniature model of our present great federal commonwealth.

We may now in conclusion point to the part which Connecticut played in the formation of the federal constitution under which we live. You will remember that there was strong opposition to such a constitution in most of the states. Everywhere there was a lurking dread of what might be done by a new and untried continental power, possessing powers of taxation and having a jurisdiction beyond and in some respects

above those of the separate thirteen states. You will remember that the year 1786 was one in which civil war was threatened in many quarters, and something approaching civil war actually existed in Massachusetts. The opposition between North and South was feeble compared to what it afterward became, yet there was real danger that the Kentucky settlements would secede from the Union and be followed by the Southern states. The jealousy between large and small states was more bitter than it is now possible for us to realize. War seemed not unlikely between New York and New Hampshire, and actually imminent between New York and her two neighbours, Connecticut and New Jersey. It was in a solemn mood that our statesmen assembled in Philadelphia, and the first question to be settled, one that must be settled before any further work could be done, was the way in which power was to be shared between the states and the general government.

It was agreed that there should be two houses in the federal legislature, and Virginia, whose statesmen, led by George Washington and James Madison, were taking the lead in the constructive work of the moment, insisted that both houses should represent population. To this the large states assented; while the small states, led by New Jersey, would have nothing of the sort, but insisted that representation in the federal legislature should be only by states. Such an arrangement would have left things very much as they were under the old federation. It would have left Congress a mere diplomatic body representing a league of sovereign states. If such were to be the outcome of the combination, it might as well not have met.

The bitterness and fierceness of the controversy was extreme. Gunning Bedford of Delaware exclaimed to the men of whom James Madison was the leader: "Gentlemen, I do not trust you. If you possess the power, the abuse of it could not be checked; and what then would prevent you from exercising it to our destruction? Sooner than be ruined, there are foreign powers who will take us by the hand." When talk of this sort could be indulged in, it was clear that the situation had become dangerous. The convention was on the verge of breaking up, and the members were thinking of going home, their minds clouded and their hearts rent at the imminency of civil strife, when a compromise was suggested by Oliver Ellsworth of Windsor, Roger Sherman of New Haven, and William Samuel Johnson of Stratford, — three immortal names. These men represented Connecticut, the state which for a hundred and fifty years had been familiar with the harmonious coöperation of the federal and national principles. In the election of her governor Connecticut was a little nation; in the election of her assembly she was a little confederation. However the case may stand under the altered conditions of the present time, Connecticut had in those days no reason to be dissatisfied with the working of her government. Her delegates suggested that the same twofold principle should be applied on a continental scale in the new constitution: let the national principle prevail in the House of Representatives and the federal principle in the Senate.

This happy thought was greeted with approval by the wise old head of Franklin, but the delegates obstinately wrangled over it until, when the question

of equality of suffrage in the Senate was put to vote, the compromise went to the verge of defeat. The result was a tie. Had the vote of Georgia been given in the negative, it would have defeated the compromise; but this catastrophe was prevented by the youthful Abraham Baldwin, a native of Guilford and lately a tutor in Yale College, who had recently emigrated to Georgia. Baldwin was not convinced of the desirableness of the compromise, but he felt that its defeat was likely to bring about that worst of calamities, the breaking up of the convention. He prevented such a calamity by voting for the compromise contrary to his colleague, whereby the vote of Georgia was divided and lost.

Thus it was that at one of the most critical moments of our country's existence the sons of Connecticut played a decisive part and made it possible for the framework of our national government to be completed. When we consider this noble climax and the memorable beginnings which led up to it, when we also reflect the mighty part which federalism is unquestionably destined to play in the future, we shall be convinced that there is no state in our Union whose history will better repay careful study than Connecticut. Surely few incidents are better worth turning over and over and surveying from all possible points of view than the framing of a little confederation of river towns at Hartford in January, 1639.





V

THE DEEPER SIGNIFICANCE OF THE  
BOSTON TEA PARTY



## V

### THE DEEPER SIGNIFICANCE OF THE BOSTON TEA PARTY

It may be one of the symptoms of a wholesome reaction against the vapid Fourth of July rhetoric of the past generation that writers of our own day sometimes betray a tendency to belittle the events of the Revolutionary period. The smoke of that conflict is so far cleared away as to enable us to see that sometimes the popular leaders did things that were clearly wrong; we find, too, that all the Tories were not quite so black as they have been painted; and from such discoveries a reaction of feeling more or less extensive naturally arises. In the case of many scholars born and bred in the neighbourhood of Boston such a reaction has within the last few years been especially strong and marked. The immediate cause has doubtless been the publication of the *Diary and Letters of Thomas Hutchinson*, the last royal governor of Massachusetts.

In such waves of feeling there is apt to be a lack of discrimination; bad things get praised along with the good, and good things get blamed along with the bad. An instance is furnished by an essay on "Boston Mobs before the Revolution," by the late Andrew Preston Peabody, published in the *Atlantic Monthly*, September, 1888. This interesting paper was called forth by the act of the Massachusetts legislature in voting a civic monument to Crispus Attucks and the

other victims of the affray in King Street, commonly known as the "Boston Massacre." What we have to note especially in the paper is the fact that it expressly includes the Boston Tea Party among the reprehensible riots of the time, and discerns no difference between its performance and the sacking of private houses by drunken ruffians. Furthermore, says Dr. Peabody, "the illegal seizure of the tea was in a certain sense parallel to the (so-called) respectable mob that in the infancy of the antislavery movement nearly killed Garrison, and made the jail his only safe place of refuge." This comparison makes Dr. Peabody's view sufficiently explicit.

In connection with the same affair of the Attucks monument, one of the most eminent historical scholars of Boston, Mr. Abner C. Goodell, in the course of a letter to the *Boston Advertiser*, said: "If the only lesson that the popular mind has derived from the disorderly doings which preceded the Revolution is that they were the right things to be done and worthy of perpetual applause, it is high time that we adopt a rule never to mention such events as the affray in King Street and the destruction of the tea without expressions of unqualified disapprobation. Which of us would permit his sons to engage in such reprehensible proceedings to-day?" This, again, is sufficiently explicit. The act of the Tea Party is unreservedly condemned, and no consciousness is indicated of the points in which it differed from a chance affray.

It would not be right to leave these expressions of opinion without further reference to the time when they were written. Extensive strikes, especially of men employed on railroads, and accompanied with savage attempts at boycotting, had recently occurred



in St. Louis and other great cities, and something of the sort had been seen under the very shadow of Harvard's elms in Cambridge. Both Dr. Peabody and Mr. Goodell make express mention of these recent disturbances, and either assert or imply that approval of any of the irregular acts in Boston which preceded the Revolution is equivalent to approval of modern boycotting with all its attendant outrages. Now, if there is any one source of confusion against which the student of history needs to be eternally vigilant, it is the tendency to argue from loose or false analogies. Every one remembers how Mr. Mitford, some seventy years ago, wrote a History of Ancient Greece under the influence of his dread of the approaching reform of Parliament, and a precious mess he made of it. In his eyes the one thing the Athenians had done for mankind was to give it an object lesson in the evils of democracy. Very little insight into history is gained by studying it in this way; vague generalizations are grossly misleading; real knowledge is attained only when the events of a period are studied in their causal relations to one another amid all their concrete complexity. It is this which makes the study of history, rightly pursued, such a superb discipline for the intellectual powers. It is this which enables us to reach conclusions which have the force of reasoned convictions. There is something rather comical in the spectacle of a writer whose verdicts upon past events are at the mercy of the next ragamuffin who may throw a bomb in Chicago or set fire to a barn in Vermont.

The opinions here quoted seem to show that in the current notions concerning the immediate causes of the American Revolution there is too much vague generali-

zation, with a very inadequate grasp of the situation in its definite and concrete details. It is worth our while, then, to approach once more the well-worn theme, and see if it is not possible to make a statement which shall be at once historically true and fair to all parties concerned.

First, we must note the fundamental fact out of which the American Revolution took its rise. A revolution need not necessarily have arisen from such a fact, but it did. The fundamental fact was the need for a continental revenue, whereas no such thing existed as a continental government with taxing power. This need was vividly brought out by seventy years of war with France. At the time of the treaty of Paris, in 1763, the need for a permanent continental government with taxing power had long been forcibly shown, though people were everywhere obstinately unwilling to admit the fact. For seventy-four years the colonies had been in a condition varying from armed truce to open warfare with France. The struggle began in 1689, when the Dutch stadtholder became king of Great Britain, when Andros was overthrown at Boston, and Leisler seized the government of New York, and Frontenac was sent over to Canada with vast designs. Occasionally this struggle came to a pause, but it was never really ended till, in 1763, France lost every rood of land she had ever possessed in North America. At first it was only the New England colonies and New York that were directly concerned, and in Leisler's Congress of 1690 no colony south of Maryland was represented. But by the time when Robert Dinwiddie ruled in Virginia all the colonies came to be involved, and the war in its latest stage assumed continental dimensions. Regular troops

from Great Britain assisted the colonies and were supported by the imperial exchequer. The colonies contributed men and money to the cause, as it was right they should; and here the need of a continental taxing power soon made itself disastrously felt. The drift of circumstances had brought the thirteen colonies into the presence of what we may call a continental state of things, but nowhere was there any single hand that could take a continental grasp of the situation. There were thirteen separate governors to ask for money and thirteen distinct legislatures to grant it. Under these circumstances the least troublesome fact was that the colonies remote from the seat of danger for the moment did not contribute their fair share. Usually the case was worse than this. It often happened that the legislature of a colony immediately threatened with invasion would refuse to make its grant unless it could wring some concession from the governor in return. Thus, in Pennsylvania, there was the burning question as to taxing the proprietary lands, and more than once, while firebrand and tomahawk were busy on the frontier, did the legislature sit quietly at Philadelphia, seeking to use the public distress as a tool with which to force the governor into submission. It is an old story how it proved impossible to get horses for the expedition against Fort Duquesne until Benjamin Franklin sent around to the farmers and pledged his personal credit for them. Sometimes the case was even worse, as in 1674, when Pontiac's confederates were wreaking such havoc in the Alleghanies, and Connecticut did not feel sufficient interest in the woes of Pennsylvania to send them assistance. Such lamentable want of coöperation and promptness often gave advantages to the enemy

which neutralized their immense and permanent disadvantages of fighting on exterior lines.

The royal governors all understood these things, and felt them keenly. As a rule they were honourable men, with a strong sense of responsibility for the welfare of their provinces. They saw clearly that, to bring out the military resources of the country, some kind of continental government with taxing powers was needed.

Any such continental government was regarded by the people with fear and loathing. The sentiment of union between colonies had not come into existence, the feeling of local independence was intense and jealous, and a continental government was an unknown and untried horror. So late as 1788, when grim necessity had driven the people of the United States to adopt our present Constitution as the alternative to anarchy, it was with shivering dread that most of them accepted the situation. A quarter of a century earlier the repugnance was much stronger.

It should never be lost sight of that the difficulty with which the royal governors had to contend in the days of the French War was exactly the same difficulty with which the Continental Congress had to contend throughout the War of Independence and the critical period that followed it. We cannot understand American history until this fact has become part of our permanent mental structure. The difficulty was exactly the same; it was the absence of a continental government with taxing power. The Continental Congress had no such power; it could only ask the state legislatures for money, just as the royal governors had done, and if it took a state three years to raise what was

sorely needed within three months, there was no help for it. Hence the slowness and feebleness with which the War of Independence was conducted. When the Congress asked for an army of ninety thousand men for the year 1777, the demand was moderate and could have been met without a greater strain than was cheerfully borne during our Civil War; but the army furnished in response never reached thirty thousand, and the following years made even a poorer show. Our statesmen were then learning by hard experience exactly what the royal governors had learned before, — that work of continental dimensions, such as a great foreign war, required a continental government to conduct it, and that no government is worthy of the name unless it can raise money by taxation. After the peace of 1783 our statesmen were soon taught by abundant and ugly symptoms that in the absence of such a government the states were in imminent danger of falling apart and coming to blows with each other. It was only this greater dread that drove our people to do most reluctantly in 1788 what they had scornfully refused to do in 1754, and consent to the establishment of a continental government with taxing power. Let us not forget, then, that from first to last the difficulty was one and the same.

If we had surmounted the difficulty in 1754, the separation from Great Britain might perhaps not have occurred at all. In that year the prospect of an immediate renewal of war with France made it necessary to confer with the chiefs of the Six Nations, and in the congress that assembled at Albany Benjamin Franklin proposed a plan which, had it been adopted, would doubtless have surmounted the difficulty. It



would have created a federal government, with power of taxation for federal purposes, with local rights fully guaranteed, and with a president or governor-general appointed by the crown. The royal governors of course approved the plan, the people treated it with indignant contempt; the difficulty was acutely felt all through the war, and then the British Parliament, in a perfectly friendly spirit, tried to mend matters.

The necessity for a continental revenue continued, and always would continue. Scarcely had peace been made with France when Pontiac's terrible war broke out and furnished fresh illustrations of the perennial difficulty. Since the Americans would not create a continental taxing power for themselves, Parliament must undertake to supply the place of such a power. The failure of Franklin's plan of union seemed to force this work upon Parliament; certainly there was no other body that could raise money for the requisite continental purposes.

But when Parliament undertook such a step it ventured upon an untrodden field. No Parliament had ever raised money in America by direct taxation. As for port duties the Americans had not actually resisted them. As for parliamentary legislation, in the very few instances in which it had been attempted, as for example in the case of the Massachusetts Land Bank of 1740, the colonists had submitted with an exceedingly ill grace, as much as to say, "You had better not try it again!" According to the theory prevalent in the colonies and soon to be stated in print by Thomas Jefferson, they owed allegiance to the king but not to Parliament. The relation was like that of Hanover to Great Britain at that time, or like that of Norway



to Sweden at the present day, with one and the same king but separate and independent legislatures. On this theory the Americans had practically lived most of the time. But this point British statesmen and the British people did not realize. In their minds Parliament was the supreme body at home; even the king wore his crown by act of Parliament; in the empire at large there must be supreme authority somewhere, and as it clearly was not in the king, it must be in Parliament.

Accordingly, when George Grenville became prime minister, just as Pontiac's war was breaking out, he saw no harm in raising an American revenue for continental purposes by act of Parliament. Grenville cared little for theories of government; he was a man of business and liked to have things done promptly and in a shipshape manner. He was willing to have the Americans raise the revenue themselves; only if they wouldn't do it, he would; there must be no more shilly-shallying. What would be the least annoying kind of tax for the purpose? Doubtless a stamp tax. William Shirley, the very popular royal governor of Massachusetts, had said so ten years before, and there seemed to be reason in it. A stamp tax involves no awkward questions about private property and incomes, puts no premium upon lying, and entails as little expense as possible in its collection. Moreover, it cannot be evaded, and the proceeds all go into the treasury. So Grenville got his Stamp Act ready, but with commendable prudence and courtesy he gave the Americans a year's notice in advance, so that if they had anything better to suggest it might be duly considered.

The Americans had no alternative to suggest except a system of requisitions, — in other words, asking the thirteen separate legislatures to vote supplies. With that system they had floundered along for three-quarters of a century, and with it they were to flounder for a quarter of a century more until their eyes should be opened. Grenville was tired of so much floundering, and so he brought in his Stamp Act, about which one of the most notable things is that Parliament passed it with scarcely a word of debate. There was no unfriendly intent in the measure. It was not designed to take money from American pockets for British purposes. Every penny was to be used in America for the defence of the colonies. Some of the stamps, indeed, were higher in price than they need have been, but on the whole there was little in the Stamp Act for the Americans to object to except to the principle upon which the whole thing was based. On that point Parliament was not sufficiently awake, though some demonstrations had already been made in America and such men as Hutchinson had warned Grenville of the danger.

When it was known in America that the Stamp Act had become law, the resistance took two forms: there was mob violence, and there was the sober appeal to reason. From the outset the law was nullified; people simply would not touch the stamps or have anything to do with them. The story of the riots in New York and Boston needs no repetition, but one of the disgraceful scenes in Boston calls for mention in order to point the contrast which we shall have to make hereafter. Thomas Hutchinson, the foremost scholar of his time in America and the foremost writer,

except Franklin, was then chief justice of Massachusetts. Some people believed him to have instigated the Stamp Act, which he had really opposed ; others, without due foundation, suspected him of having informed against sundry respectable citizens as smugglers. So one night in August, 1765, a drunken mob sacked his house, destroyed his furniture and pictures, and ruined his splendid library. This affair was typical of riots in general. It started at the suggestion of some unknown ruffian, its fury fell chiefly upon an innocent person, and its sole achievement was the wanton destruction of valuable property. It was an event in the history of crime, and belongs among such incidents as fill the Newgate Calendar. How did the people of Massachusetts treat this affair? Town-meetings all over the province condemned it in the strongest terms ; the leaders of the mob were thrown into prison, and the legislature promptly indemnified Hutchinson for his losses so far as money could repair them. The whole story shows that Massachusetts had no fondness for riots and rioters.

Besides such cases of mob violence there was the sober appeal to reason, and the American case was for the first time distinctly and fully stated. The principle of "no taxation without representation" was clearly set forth by Patrick Henry and Samuel Adams, and was incorporated in the resolutions adopted by the congress at New York. This was the formal answer of the Americans to Parliament. When it reached that body, it found George Grenville in opposition. Lord Rockingham had become Prime Minister, and a bill was brought in for the repeal of the Stamp Act. That measure had been passed almost without ques-

tion, but its repeal was the occasion of a debate that lasted nearly all winter. For the first time the constitutional relations of the colonies to the imperial government were thoroughly discussed, and three distinct views found expression: 1. The Tories held that the Stamp Act was all right and ought to be enforced. 2. The New Whigs, represented by William Pitt, accepted the American doctrine of no taxation without representation, and urged that the Stamp Act should be repealed expressly as founded upon an erroneous principle. 3. The Old Whigs, represented by Fox and Burke, refrained from committing themselves to such a doctrine, but considered it bad statesmanship to insist upon a measure which public opinion in America unanimously condemned. This third view prevailed, and the Stamp Act was repealed, while a Declaratory Resolve asserted the constitutional right of Parliament to legislate for the colonies in any way it might see fit.

This result was rightly regarded as a practical victory for the Americans, but it gave general satisfaction in England, for it seemed to remove a source of dispute that had most suddenly and unexpectedly loomed up in alarming proportions. The rejoicings in London were no less hearty than in New York. The affair had been creditably conducted. The dangerous question had been argued on broad, statesmanlike grounds, and the undue claims of Parliament had been virtually relinquished. It is true, the difficulty in America as to how that continental revenue was to be raised was left untouched. But friendly discussion might at length find a cure, or the question might be allowed to drop until some more favourable moment.

A situation, however, was arising which would soon put an end to friendly discussion, and which would neither let the question drop nor deal with it fairly. It is a pity that great political questions could not more often be argued in an atmosphere of sweetness and light. Their solution would exhibit a kind and degree of sense such as the world is not yet familiar with. Suppose that in 1860 the Americans, north and south, could have discussed the whole slavery question without passion; and suppose that all the slaves had been set free, and their owners compensated at their full market value; how small would have been the cost in dollars and cents compared with the cost of the Civil War, to say nothing of the saving of life! Such a supposition seems grotesque, so great is the difference, in respect of foresight and self-control, between the human nature implied in it and that with which we are familiar. It is to be hoped that the slow modifications wrought by civilized life will by and by bring mankind to that stage of wisdom which now seems unattainable; but for many a weary year no doubt will still be seen the same old groping and stumbling, the same old self-defeating selfishness.

In 1766 the questions connected with raising a continental revenue in America might have been carried along toward a peaceful settlement, had it been possible to keep them out of politics. But that was impossible. The discussion over the Stamp Act had dragged the American question into British politics, and there was one wily and restless politician who soon came to stake his very political existence upon its solution. That politician was the young king, George III., who was entering upon his long reign with an arduous problem before



his mind, how to break down cabinet government and parliamentary supremacy and convert the British state into a true monarchy. In order to carry out this purpose he relied chiefly upon a kind of corruption in which the chief element was the fact that the representation in the House of Commons had got quite out of gear with the population of the country. During more than two centuries the change from mediæval into modern England had come about without any redistribution of seats in that representative chamber. Some districts had been developing new trades and industries, while others had simply been overgrown with ivy and moss, until there had arisen that state of things so often quoted and described, in which Old Sarum without a human inhabitant had two members of Parliament, while Birmingham and Manchester had none. There were not less than a hundred rotten boroughs which ought to have been disfranchised without a moment's delay. They were for the most part implements of corruption, either bought up or otherwise controlled by leading Whig or Tory families, or by the king. For more than seventy years, ever since the expulsion of the Stuarts, this sort of corruption had been universally relied on in English politics. During that time the Tories had been mostly discredited because of the Jacobite element in their party. This was especially the case in the reigns of George I. and George II., each of which had its Jacobite rebellion to suppress. The Old Whig families were then all-powerful, the first two Georges were simply their wards, and under the long and epoch-making administration of Sir Robert Walpole the modern system of cabinet government was set quite firmly upon its feet. Under this



state of things with the elder Pitt for leader, England brought to a triumphant close a truly glorious war, one of the most important in which she had ever been engaged. Whenever it was needful for carrying a point in domestic or foreign policy, the great Whig leaders made free use of parliamentary corruption, though Pitt always proudly abstained from such methods. Much of the time a decisive vote in the Commons was thrown by members who were simply owned body and soul by the great Whig families.

When George III. came to the throne in 1760, a boy of eighteen years, he had learned to regard this state of things with a feeling which may fairly be described as one of choking rage. It was not the corruption that enraged him, but the subordination of the royal power. His aim in life, as defined from childhood, was to overthrow the Whig aristocracy and make himself a real monarch. There were two sets of circumstances which seemed to favour his ambition. In the first place, the disappearance of Jacobitism as an active political force brought the united Tory party to the support of the House of Hanover, so that there was a chance for the king to control a majority in Parliament. In the second place, the relations between the foremost political leaders happened to be such as to enable the king to frame a succession of short-lived and jarring ministries, thus bringing discredit upon cabinet government. Under such circumstances the young man was busily engaged in building up a party of personal adherents entirely dependent upon him as dispenser of patronage, when all at once the American question was thrown upon the stage in a way that alarmed him greatly.

For some years past there had been growing up in England a new party of Whigs very different from the country squires who so long had ruled the land. They represented the trades and industries of modern imperial England, they entertained many democratic ideas, and were disposed to be intolerant of ancient abuses. They saw that the whole body politic was poisoned by the rotten boroughs, and they knew that unless this source of corruption could be stopped there was an end of English freedom. Accordingly, in 1745 these New Whigs, under the lead of William Pitt, began the great agitation for Parliamentary Reform which only achieved its first grand triumph with Earl Grey and Lord John Russell in 1832. When the Stamp Act was repealed, in 1766, the question of Parliamentary Reform had been before the public for twenty-one years, and it largely determined the character of the speeches and votes upon that memorable occasion.

The resolutions of Patrick Henry and Samuel Adams and the New York congress asserted in the boldest language the principle of "no taxation without representation." That was one of the watchwords of the New Whigs, and hence Pitt in urging the repeal of the Stamp Act adopted the American position in full. None could deny that it was a fundamental and long-established principle of English liberty. It had been asserted by Simon de Montfort's Parliament in 1265; it had been expressly admitted by Edward I. in 1301; and since then it had never been directly impugned with success, though some kings had found ways of partially evading it, as, for instance, in the practice of benevolences which

grew up during the Wars of the Roses and was with difficulty suppressed in the seventeenth century. No Englishman could stand up and deny the principle of "no taxation without representation" without incurring the risk of being promptly refuted. Nevertheless the unreformed House of Commons had by slow stages arrived at a point where its very existence was a living denial of that principle. It was therefore impossible to separate the American case from the case of Parliamentary Reform; the very language in which the argument for Massachusetts and Virginia was couched involved also the argument for Birmingham and Manchester. Hence in the Stamp Act debate the Old Whigs, who were opposed to Parliamentary Reform, did not dare to adopt Pitt's position. That would have been suicidal; so they were obliged to urge the repeal of the Stamp Act simply upon grounds of general expediency.

The Old Whigs were opposed to reform because they felt that they needed the rotten boroughs in order to maintain control of Parliament. The king was opposed to reform for much the same reason. His schemes were based upon the hope of beating the Old Whigs at their own game, and securing by fair means or foul enough rotten boroughs to control Parliament for his own purposes. In this policy he had for a time much success. The reform of Parliament would be the death-blow to all such schemes. The king felt that it would be the ruin of all his political hopes; and this well-grounded fear possessed his half-crazy mind with all the overmastering force of a morbid fixed idea. Hence his ferocious hatred of the elder Pitt, and hence the savage temper in which after

1766 he thrust himself into American affairs. When once this desperate political gamester had entered the field, it was no longer possible for those affairs to be discussed reasonably or dealt with according to the merits of the case. In the king's mind it all reduced itself to this: on the Stamp Act question the Americans had won a victory. That was not to be endured. Somehow or other a fight must be forced again on the question of taxation, and the Americans must be compelled to eat their own words and surrender the principle in which they had so confidently intrenched themselves. This was the spirit in which the king took up the matter, and in it the original question as to raising a continental revenue for American purposes was quite lost sight of. There is nothing to show that the king cared a straw for the revenue; to snub and browbeat the Americans was all in all with him.

There was a certain kind of vulgar shrewdness in thus selecting the Americans as chief antagonists, for should their resistance tend to become rebellious, it would tend to array public opinion in England against them as disturbers of the peace, and would thus discredit the principle which they represented. Thus did this mischief-maker on the throne go to work to stir up bad feelings between two great branches of the English race.

Thus after 1766 the story of the causes of the American Revolution enters upon a new stage. In the earlier or Grenville stage a great public question was discussed on grounds of statesmanship, and the British government, having tried an impracticable solution, promptly withdrew it. No war need come

from that situation. But in the second stage we see a desperate political schemer, to the neglect of public interests and in defiance of all sound statesmanship, pushing on a needless quarrel until it inevitably ends in war. This second stage we may call the Townshend-North stage.

It was a curious fortune that provided George III. with two such advisers as Charles Townshend and Frederick North. Both were brilliant and frivolous young men without much political principle; both were inclined to take public life as an excellent joke. North lived long enough to find it no joke; Townshend stayed upon the scene till he had perpetrated one colossal piece of mischief, and then died, leaving North to take the consequences. I do not believe Lord North would ever have originated such a measure as the Revenue Act of 1767; there was no malice in his nature, but in Townshend there was a strong vein of utterly reckless diablerie. Nobody could have been more willing to please the king by picking a quarrel with the Americans, and nobody knew better how to do it. Townshend was exceptionally well informed on American affairs, and sinned with his eyes wide open. In his case it will not do to talk about the blundering of the British ministers. Grenville had blundered, but Townshend's ingenuity was devoted to brushing every American hair the wrong way.

In the debates on the repeal of the Stamp Act the Americans had been charged with inconsistency in having allowed Parliament to tax them by means of port duties, while they refused to allow it to tax them by means of stamped paper. In reply the friends of



America had drawn a distinction between *external* and *internal* taxes, and had said that the Americans did not deny Parliament's right to tax them in the former case, but only in the latter case. The distinction was more ingenious than sound, and indeed the Americans had been guilty of inconsistency. They had at first tacitly assented to port duties because the nature of an indirect tax is not so quickly and distinctly realized as that of a direct tax, and so they had only gradually come to take in the full situation. But the acquiescence in port duties had been by no means unqualified. During all the reign of Charles II. the New England colonies had virtually defied the custom-house; in later times the activity of smugglers had reduced all tariff acts to a dead letter; and so lately as 1761 the resistance to general search warrants showed what might be expected when any rash ministry should endeavour to enforce such tariff acts. In short, it was perfectly clear that if pushed to a logical statement of their position, the Americans would deny the authority of Parliament from beginning to end. No one understood this better than Townshend when he now proceeded to lay a duty upon certain dried fruits, glass, painter's colours, paper, and tea.

With this continental revenue he proposed, of course, to keep up a small army for defending the frontier; but he also proposed other things. For more than half a century the various royal governors had tried to persuade the legislatures to vote them fixed salaries, but the legislatures, unwilling to give them too loose a tether, had obstinately refused to do more than make an annual grant which expired unless renewed by a



fresh grant. This was still one of the burning questions of American politics, and Townshend now proposed to settle it offhand by taking it out of the hands of the legislatures once for all. Henceforth the governors should be paid by the crown out of the revenues collected in America, and as if this were not enough, the judges should be paid in the same way. If after these expenses there should be any surplus remaining, it would be used for pensioning eminent American officials. In plain English it would be used as a corruption fund. Thus the British ministry assumed direct control over the internal administration of the American colonies, including even the courts of justice; under these circumstances it undertook to maintain an army, which might be employed against the people as readily as against Indians; and it actually had the impudence to demand of the Americans the money to support it in doing these things! To all this, said Townshend, with an evil twinkle in his eye, you Americans can't object, you know, for your friends say you are willing to submit to port duties. Then by way of an extra good sting he added a clause prohibiting the New York legislature from assembling for business of any sort until it should be prepared to yield to the British ministry in a measure for quartering troops that was intensely unpopular in New York.

In this way did Townshend gather into a single parcel all the obnoxious things he could think of, and hurl them at the heads of the Americans in this so-called Revenue Act. His own feeling about it was betrayed in his laughing remark as he went down with it to the House of Commons, "I suppose I

shall be dismissed for my pains!" Doubtless he never could have got it through the House without the aid of the rotten boroughs, and his victory was one of the first evil symptoms of the growing power of what we may call the royal machine. No doubt Townshend looked forward to some fine sport when once the king and the Americans were set by the ears; but he had no sooner carried his measures than sudden death removed him from the scene, and Lord North took his place.

There never existed a self-respecting people that would not have resented and resisted such an outrageous measure as this pretended Revenue Act. Yet there was not much disturbance of the peace in America. All the ordinary machinery of argument and petition was used to no purpose. The measure of resistance in which all the colonies united in 1768 was an agreement to cease all commercial intercourse with Great Britain until the Revenue Act should be repealed. This agreement was to some extent evaded by traders more intent upon private gain than public policy, but on the whole it was remarkably well kept until the war came. Doubtless it seriously damaged and weakened the colonies, but it seemed the only kind of peaceful resistance that could be made.

Smuggling of course went on, and the seizure of one of John Hancock's ships for a false entry caused a riot in Boston in which one of the collector's boats was burned. This affair led the king to the dangerous step of sending troops to Boston, and the sacking of Hutchinson's house three years before was quoted to silence those members of Parliament who opposed this step. The troops stayed in Boston seventeen months,

and all that time their mere presence there was in gross violation of an act of Parliament. Our modern Tories, who hold up their hands in pious horror at every infraction of British-made law on the part of our forefathers, seem quite oblivious of the fact that according to British law these soldiers were mere trespassers in Boston. Their only legal abode was the Castle, on a small island in the harbour. They were kept in town under pretext of preserving order, but really to aid in enforcing the Revenue Act. That after seventeen months a slight scrimmage should have occurred, with the loss of half a dozen lives, was rather less than might have been expected. Next day the town-meeting ordered Hutchinson, who was then lieutenant-governor acting as governor, to remove all soldiery to the Castle, and Hutchinson promptly obeyed; he knew perfectly well that the law was on the side of the townspeople. I can imagine how that great Tory lawyer would have smiled at modern accounts of the King Street affray, in which a crowd of ruffians are depicted as wantonly assaulting the military guardians of law and order. Undoubtedly it was an affair of a mob; but it was such a scrimmage as indicated no special criminality on the part of either soldiers or citizens, and thus was a very different sort of thing from the wicked destruction of Hutchinson's house. I may add that the perfectly calm and honourable way in which the affair was handled by the courts is a sufficient comment upon the ludicrous notion that Boston was a disorderly town requiring an armed soldiery to keep the peace.

The sacking of Hutchinson's house, I say, and the chance affray on King Street were both cases of

mob law, yet it is only very loose thinking that would attempt to liken one case to the other. Our forefathers knew the difference: the Hutchinson malefactors they cast into jail, but the memory of the King Street victims they kept green for many a year by an annual oration in the Old South Meeting House, on the baleful effects of quartering soldiers among peaceful citizens in time of peace. We are now ready to consider the Tea Party, which by no stretch of definition can properly be included among cases of mob law. We are at length prepared to see just what the Tea Party was.

Early in 1770 Lord North made up his mind that the Revenue Act could not be enforced, and was a source of needless irritation, and he proposed to repeal it. But a full repeal would put things back where they were after the repeal of the Stamp Act, and even worse, for it would be a second victory for the Americans. The king could not afford to put such a weapon into the hands of the New Whigs; so it was decided to retain the duty on tea alone. In Parliament, certain Whigs objected that it would avail nothing to repeal the other duties, if that on tea were kept, since it was not revenue but principle that was at stake. Bless their simple hearts, the king knew all about that, and he kept the duty on tea, simply in order to force another fight on the question of principle. It was a question on which he was growing more and more fanatical, and nothing could prevail upon him to let it alone.

So for the next three years tea was the symbol with which the hostile spirits conjured. It stood for everything that true freemen loathe. In the deadly

tea-chest lurked the complete surrender of self-government, the payment of governors and judges by the crown, the arbitrary suppression of legislatures, the denial of the principle that freemen can be taxed only by their own representatives. So long as they were threatened with tea, the colonists would not break the non-intercourse agreement. Once the merchants of New York undertook to order from England various other articles than tea, and the news was greeted all over the country with such fury that nothing more of the sort was attempted openly. As for tea itself shipped from England, one would as soon have thought of trying to introduce the Black Death.

In the summer of 1772 the king tried to enforce the order that judges' salaries should be paid from the royal treasury. He was getting no revenue from America, but he would pay them out of the British revenues. He began with Massachusetts, and at once there was fierce excitement, which reverberated through all the colonies. The judges were forbidden under penalty of impeachment to touch the king's money, and so another year passed by and left George III. still baffled.

It was then that he hit upon his famous device for "trying the question" with America. This "trying the question" was his own phrase. It was observed that the Americans had more or less of tea to drink, though not an ounce was brought from England; whenever they solaced their nerves with the belligerent beverage, they smuggled it from Holland or the Dutch East Indies. The king, therefore, neatly arranged matters with the East India Company, so that it could afford to offer tea in American ports at



a price far below its market value; this tea, with the duty upon it, would cost American customers less than the tea smuggled from Holland, and in this way the Americans were to be ensnared into surrendering the great principle at issue.

Under these circumstances the sending of the East India Company's tea-ships to America was in no sense an incident of commerce. The king's arrangement with the Company deprived it of its commercial character. It was simply a political challenge. As Lord North openly confessed in the House of Commons, it was merely the king's method of "trying the question" with America. It was, moreover, an extremely insulting challenge. A grosser insult to any self-respecting people can hardly be imagined. It was King George's way of asking that perennial Boss Tweed question, "What are you going to do about it?" It was the most far-reaching political question that was raised in that age, for it involved the whole case of the relations of an imperial government to its colonies; a solemn question to be settled not by mobs, but by the sober and deliberate sense of the American people, and it was thus that it was settled in Boston once and forever.

Circumstances made Boston the battle-ground, and gave added point and concentrated meaning to everything that was done there. The royal challenge was aimed at the colonies as a whole, and ships were sent to New York, Philadelphia, and Charleston, as well as to Boston. In all four towns consignees were appointed to receive the tea and dispose of it after paying the duty. But in the three former towns the consignees quailed before the wrath of the people,



resigned their commissions, and took oath that they would not act in the matter. So when the tea-ships at length arrived at New York and Philadelphia, they were turned about and sent home without ever coming within the jurisdiction of the custom-house. At Charleston the ships lingered more than the legal term of twenty days in port, and then the collector seized the tea and brought it ashore; but as there was no consignee at hand to pay the duty, the fragrant leaves lay untouched in the custom-house until they rotted and fell to pieces. But before these things happened, the battle had been fought in Boston. There the consignees, two of whom were sons of Governor Hutchinson, refused to resign; on no account, therefore, would it do to let the tea come ashore at Boston, for if it did, the duty would instantly be paid. The governor was a man of intense legality; he did not approve the sending of the tea, but if a ship once came into port, it must not, in his opinion, go out again without discharging all due formalities. His sons were like him for stubborn courage, and thus it was that Boston became the seat of war. With those two redoubtable Puritans, Thomas Hutchinson and Samuel Adams, pitted against each other, it was a meeting of Greek with Greek, and one might be sure that something dramatic and incisive would come of it.

In those stormy days the governor so often turned his legislature out of doors that it may be said to have been in a chronic state of dissolution. In order to transact public business on a large scale, the town-meetings appointed committees of correspondence, whereby town might confer with town and the sense of the whole commonwealth be thus ascertained. This

system, set in operation by Samuel Adams in 1772, was one of the strongest among the organizing forces that brought into existence the Federal Union. But my point now is that the action of these committees of correspondence expressed the deliberate sense of the commonwealth as truly as any act of legislature could have expressed it.

There is something eloquent and touching in the stained and yellow records of those old town-meetings. When it was known that the ships were coming, Boston asked advice of all the other towns. "Brethren, we are reduced to this dilemma, either to sit down quiet under this and every other burden that our enemies shall see fit to lay upon us, or to rise up and resist this and every plan laid for our destruction, as becomes wise freemen. In this extremity we earnestly request your advice."

Some of the replies from the mountain villages are worth recording. The farmers of Lenox said, "As we are in a remote wilderness corner of the earth, we know but little; but neither nature nor the God of nature requireth us to crouch, Issachar-like, between the two burdens of poverty and slavery." The farmers of Petersham were concerned to think of the risk that Boston was assuming, exposed as she was to the fire of a British fleet. "The time may come," they said, "when you may be driven from your goodly heritage; if that should be the case, we invite you to share with us in our small supplies of the necessities of life, and should we still not be able to withstand, we are determined to retire and seek repose amongst the inland aboriginal natives, with whom we doubt not but to find more humanity and brotherly love than

we have lately received from our mother country." The Boston committee replied, "We join with the town of Petersham in preferring a life among savages to the most splendid condition of slavery; but Heaven will bless the united efforts of a brave people."

From every town in Massachusetts came instructions that on no account whatever must the tea be allowed to come ashore. Similar advice came in from the other colonies. The action of the Boston consignees in refusing to resign had fixed the eyes of the whole country upon that town. It was rightly felt that the weal or woe of America depended upon the action of the people there. If through any weakness of Boston a single ounce of tea should be landed, there was a widespread feeling that the chief bond of union between the colonies would be snapped. Hence the cordial letter from Philadelphia said: "Our only fear is that you may shrink. May God give you virtue enough to save the liberties of your country." The advice that thus came from all quarters was absolutely unanimous. When the tea-ships arrived late in November in Boston harbour, they were taken in charge by the committees of Boston, Cambridge, Charlestown, Roxbury, and Dorchester, and a military guard was placed over them. From that time forth until the end not a step was taken save under the direction of these five committees, to whose action a consistent unity was given by the prudent leadership of Samuel Adams, while in all that they did they felt that in the sight of the whole country they were discharging a sacred duty. Truly for an instance of mob law this Tea Party was somewhat conscientiously and prayerfully prepared!

There were just twenty days in which to try all legal measures for sending away the ships without landing the tea, but legal measures failed because one side was as stubborn as the other. After the ships had once come above the Castle, they could not go out again without the regular clearance from the collector of the port, or else a special pass from the governor. But the collector manœuvred and wore away the time without granting a clearance. For nineteen days and nights the people's guard patrolled the wharves, sentinels watched from the church belfries, the tar barrels on Beacon Hill were kept ready for lighting, and any attempt at landing the tea forcibly would have been met by an instant uprising of the neighbouring counties. So things went till Thursday, December 16, the last of the twenty days. The morning was a drizzling rain, but in the afternoon it cleared off bright and crisp and frosty, while all day in the Old South Church a town-meeting was busy with momentous issues. After midnight nothing but a personal assault could prevent the collector from seizing the tea and bringing it ashore, and nothing but personal violence could prevent one or both the young Hutchinsons from paying the duty. There was but one peaceful avenue of escape from the situation. The governor could grant a pass which would enable the ships to go out without a clearance. Would he do so? Samuel Adams knew him too well to expect it. Francis Rotch, the owner of the principal ship, was sent out to the governor's country house on Milton Hill, to ask for a pass. While his return was awaited a gentleman highly esteemed, already wasted with the disease that was soon to end his days, addressed the assembly.

He reminded them of the probable consequences of what might be done that day — nothing less than war against the whole power of Great Britain — and begged them to act with such consequences fully in view. After this touching word of caution from Josiah Quincy, a final vote was taken. Suppose the governor should refuse, might the tea on any account whatever be suffered to land? One cannot step into the venerable church to-day without hearing its rafters ring with that sturdy unanimous “No!” How the vote was to be carried into effect few people knew, but Samuel Adams knew, and so did Dr. Joseph Warren and others who had counselled together in a back room in Edes and Gill’s printing-office on the corner of Court and Brattle streets. There was a Boston merchant who evidently knew what was intended. It had grown dark and the great church was dimly lighted with candles when this gentleman got up and asked, “Mr. Moderator, did any one ever think how tea would mix with salt water?” and there was a shout of applause. At length the governor’s refusal came, and never did such silence settle down over an assembly as when Adams arose and exclaimed, “This meeting can do nothing more to save the country!” The response to this solemn watchword was the war-whoop from outside, and those strange Indian figures passing by in the moonlight. Was there ever such a riot as that which followed, when those thronging thousands upon the wharves stood with bated breath, while the busy click of hatchets came from the ships and from moment to moment a broken chest was hoisted upon the bulwark and its fragrant contents emptied into the icy waters? Things happened there,



the like of which, I dare say, were never recorded in the history of riots. So punctilious were those Indians that when one of them by accident broke a padlock belonging to one of the ship's officers, he bought a new padlock the next morning and made good the loss.

Who were these Indians? Admiral Montagu and other British gentlemen, who with him beheld the proceedings, saw fit to declare that they "were not a disorderly rabble, but men of sense, coolness, and intrepidity." Paul Revere was among them, and, in all probability, Dr. Warren was one. George Robert Twelves Hawes, one of the last survivors, died in 1835, at the age of ninety-eight. He used to tell how, while he was busily ripping open a chest, the man next to him raised his hatchet so high that the Indian blanket fell away from his arm and disclosed the well-known crimson velvet sleeve and point-lace ruffles of John Hancock!

Can anybody really discover in these proceedings anything that justifies a comparison with the furious pro-slavery mob that threatened Garrison's life? The writer who made that strange comparison seems to have been thinking of the fact that, in both cases, well-dressed persons were concerned. I suppose Hancock's velvet sleeve may be responsible for the droll analogy. It seems to me eminently fitting that the hand which subscribed so handsomely the Declaration of Independence should have taken part in the decisive defiance that brought on the war. We are told that the destruction of the tea was "illegal"; so was the Declaration of Independence. Each rested upon the paramount right of self-preservation, and the

former was no more the act of a mob than the latter. It was the deliberate and coolly reasoned act of the people of Massachusetts, cordially approved and stoutly defended by the people of the thirteen colonies. The contemporary British historian Gordon saw clearly that the crisis was one in which no compromise was possible, and the only alternative, the surrender of Boston, would have imperilled the whole future of America. As Dr. Ramsay said, you could not condemn the Tea Party without condemning the Revolution altogether, for in no other way could the men of Boston discharge the duty which they owed to the country. But a more fitting comment will never be uttered than that of the enthusiastic John Adams, the day after the event: "This is the most magnificent movement of all. There is a dignity, a majesty, a sublimity, in this last effort of the patriots, that I greatly admire. . . . This destruction of the tea . . . must have so important consequences and so lasting, that I cannot but consider it an epoch in history."

Yes, this is the true judgment. If there is anything in human life that is dignified and grand, it is the self-restraint of masses of men under extreme provocation, and the steady guidance of their actions by the light of sober reason; and from this point of view the Boston Tea Party will always remain a typical instance of what is majestic and sublime.



VI

REMINISCENCES OF HUXLEY





## VI

### REMINISCENCES OF HUXLEY

THE recent publication of an admirable memoir of Huxley, by his son Leonard,<sup>1</sup> has awakened in me old memories of some of the pleasantest scenes I have ever known. The book is written in a spirit of charming frankness, and is thickly crowded with details not one of which could well be spared. A notable feature is the copiousness of the extracts from familiar letters, in which everything is faithfully reproduced, even to the genial nonsense that abounds, or the big, big D that sometimes, though rarely, adds its pungent flavour. Huxley was above all things a man absolutely simple and natural; he never posed, was never starched, or prim, or on his good behaviour; and he was nothing if not playful. A biography that brings him before us, robust and lifelike on every page, as this book does, is surely a model biography. A brief article, like the present, cannot even attempt to do justice to it, but I am moved to jot down some of the reminiscences and reflections which it has awakened.

My first introduction to the fact of Huxley's existence was in February, 1861, when I was a sophomore at Harvard. The second serial number of Herbert Spencer's "First Principles," which had just arrived from London, and on which I was feasting my soul,

<sup>1</sup> "Life and Letters of Thomas Henry Huxley." By his son, Leonard Huxley. In two volumes. New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1900.

contained an interesting reference to Huxley's views concerning a "pre-geologic past of unknown duration." In the next serial number a footnote informed the reader that the phrase "persistence of force," since become so famous, was suggested by Huxley, as avoiding an objection which Spencer had raised to the current expression "conservation of force." Further references to Huxley, as also to Tyndall, in the course of the book, left me with a vague conception of the three friends as, after a certain fashion, partners in the business of scientific research and generalization.

Some such vague conception was developed in the mind of the general public into divers droll misconceptions. Even as Spencer's famous phrase, "survival of the fittest," which he suggested as preferable to "natural selection," is by many people ascribed to Darwin, so we used to hear wrathful allusions to "Huxley's Belfast Address," and similar absurdities. The climax was reached in 1876, when Huxley and his wife made a short visit to the United States. Early in that year Tyndall had married a daughter of Lord Claud Hamilton, brother of the Duke of Abercorn, and one fine morning in August we were gravely informed by the newspapers that "Huxley and his titled bride" had just arrived in New York. For our visitors, who had left at home in London seven goodly children, some of them approaching maturity, this item of news was a source of much merriment.

To return to my story, it was not long before my notion of Huxley came to be that of a very sharply defined and powerful individuality; for such he appeared in his "Lectures on the Origin of Species" and in his "Evidence as to Man's Place in Nature," both

published in 1863. Not long afterward, in reading the lay sermon on "The Advisableness of Improving Natural Knowledge," I felt that here was a poetic soul whom one could not help loving. In those days I fell in with Youmans, who had come back from England bubbling and brimming over with racy anecdotes about the philosophers and men of science. Of course the Soapy Sam incident was not forgotten, and Youmans' version of it, which was purely from hearsay, could make no pretension to verbal accuracy; nevertheless it may be worth citing. Mr. Leonard Huxley has carefully compared several versions from eye and ear witnesses, together with his father's own comments, and I do not know where one could find a more striking illustration of the difficulty of attaining absolute accuracy in writing even contemporary history.

As I heard the anecdote from Youmans: It was at the meeting of the British Association at Oxford in 1860, soon after the publication of Darwin's epoch-making book, and while people in general were wagging their heads at it, that the subject came up for discussion before a fashionable and hostile audience. Samuel Wilberforce, the plausible and self-complacent Bishop of Oxford, commonly known as "Soapy Sam," launched out in a rash speech, conspicuous for its ignorant misstatements, and highly seasoned with appeals to the prejudices of the audience, upon whose lack of intelligence the speaker relied. Near him sat Huxley, already eminent as a man of science, and known to look favourably upon Darwinism, but more or less youthful withal, only five-and-thirty, so that the bishop anticipated sport in badgering him. At the close of his speech he suddenly turned upon Huxley

and begged to be informed if the learned gentleman was really willing to be regarded as the descendant of a monkey. Eager self-confidence had blinded the bishop to the tactical blunder in thus coarsely inviting a retort. Huxley was instantly upon his feet with a speech demolishing the bishop's card house of mistakes; and at the close he observed that since a question of personal preferences had been very improperly brought into the discussion of a scientific theory, he felt free to confess that if the alternatives were descent, on the one hand, from a respectable monkey, or on the other from a bishop of the English Church who could stoop to such misrepresentations and sophisms as the audience had lately listened to, he should declare in favour of the monkey!

Now this was surely not what Huxley said, nor how he said it. His own account is that, at Soapy Sam's insolent taunt, he simply whispered to his neighbour, Sir Benjamin Brodie, "The Lord hath delivered him into my hands!" a remark which that excellent old gentleman received with a stolid stare. Huxley sat quiet until the chairman called him up. His concluding retort seems to have been most carefully reported by John Richard Green, then a student at Oxford, in a letter to his friend, Boyd Dawkins: "I asserted — and I repeat — that a man has no reason to be ashamed of having an ape for his grandfather. If there were an ancestor whom I should feel shame in recalling, it would rather be a man — a man of restless and versatile intellect — who, not content with an equivocal success in his own sphere of activity, plunges into scientific questions with which he has no real acquaintance, only to obscure them by an aimless rhetoric, and distract the attention

of his hearers from the real point at issue by eloquent digressions and skilled appeals to religious prejudice." This can hardly be accurate; no electric effect could have been wrought by so long-winded a sentiment. I agree with a writer in *Macmillan's Magazine* that this version is "much too Green," but it doubtless gives the purport of what Huxley probably said in half as many but far more picturesque and fitting words. I have a feeling that the electric effect is best preserved in the Youmans version, in spite of its manifest verbal inaccuracy. It is curious to read that in the ensuing buzz of excitement a lady fainted, and had to be carried from the room; but the audience were in general quite alive to the bishop's blunder in manners and tactics, and, with the genuine English love of fair play, they loudly applauded Huxley. From that time forth it was recognized that he was not the sort of man to be browbeaten. As for Bishop Wilberforce, he carried with him from the affray no bitterness, but was always afterward most courteous to his castigator.

When Huxley had his scrimmage with Congreve, in 1869, over the scientific aspects of Positivism, I was giving lectures to postgraduate classes at Harvard on the Positive Philosophy. I never had any liking for Comte or his ideas, but entertained an absurd notion that the epithet "Positive" was a proper and convenient one to apply to scientific methods and scientific philosophy in general. In the course of the discussion I attacked sundry statements of Huxley with quite unnecessary warmth, for such is the superfluous belligerency of youth. The *World* reported my lectures in full, insomuch that each one filled six or seven columns, and the editor, Manton Marble, sent copies regularly



to Huxley and others. Four years afterward I went to London, to spend some time there in finishing "Cosmic Philosophy" and getting it through the press. I had corresponded with Spencer for several years, and soon after my arrival he gave one of his exquisite little dinners at his own lodgings. Spencer's omniscience extended to the kitchen, and as composer of a menu neither Carême nor Francatelli could have surpassed him. The other guests were Huxley, Tyndall, Lewes, and Hughlings Jackson. Huxley took but little notice of me, and I fancied that something in those lectures must have offended him. But two or three weeks later Spencer took me to the dinner at the X Club, all the members of which were present except Lubbock. When the coffee was served Huxley brought his chair around to my side, and talked with me the rest of the evening. My impression was that he was the cosiest man I had ever met. He ended by inviting me to his house for the next Sunday at six, for what he called "tall tea."

This was the introduction to a series of experiences so delightful that, if one could only repeat them, the living over again all the bad quarters of an hour in one's lifetime would not be too high a price to pay. I was already at home in several London households, but nowhere was anything so sweet as the cordial welcome in that cosy drawing-room on Marlborough Place, where the great naturalist became simply "Pater" (pronounced *Patter*), to be pulled about and tousled and kissed by those lovely children; nor could anything so warm the heart of an exile (if so melancholy a term can properly be applied to anybody sojourning in beloved London) as to have the little seven-year-old miss

climb into one's lap and ask for fairy tales, whereof I luckily had an ample repertoire. Nothing could be found more truly hospitable than the long dinner table, where our beaming host used to explain, "Because this is called a tea is no reason why a man shouldn't pledge his friend in a stoup of Rhenish, or even in a noggin of Glenlivet, if he has a mind to." At the end of our first evening I was told that a plate would be set for me every Sunday, and I must never fail to come. After two or three Sundays, however, I began to feel afraid of presuming too much upon the cordiality of these new friends, and so, by a superhuman effort of self-control, and at the cost of unspeakable wretchedness, I stayed away. For this truancy I was promptly called to account, a shamefaced confession was extorted, and penalties, vague but dire, were denounced in case of a second offence; so I never missed another Sunday evening till the time came for leaving London.

Part of the evening used to be spent in the little overcrowded library, before a blazing fire, while we discussed all manner of themes, scientific or poetical, practical or philosophical, religious or æsthetic. Huxley, like a true epicure, smoked the sweet little brierwood pipe, but he seemed to take especial satisfaction in seeing me smoke very large full-flavoured Havanas from a box which some Yankee admirer had sent him. Whatever subject came uppermost in our talk, I was always impressed with the fulness and accuracy of his information and the keenness of his judgments; but that is, of course, what any appreciative reader can gather from his writings. Unlike Spencer, he was an omnivorous reader. Of historical and literary knowledge, such as one usually gets from books, Spencer

had a great deal, and of an accurate and well-digested sort; he had some incomprehensible way of absorbing it through the pores of the skin, — at least, he never seemed to read books. Huxley, on the other hand, seemed to read everything worth reading, — history, politics, metaphysics, poetry, novels, even books of science; for perhaps it may not be superfluous to point out to the general world of readers that no great man of science owes his scientific knowledge to books. Huxley's colossal knowledge of the animal kingdom was not based upon the study of Cuvier, Baer, and other predecessors, but upon direct personal examination of thousands of organisms, living and extinct. He cherished a wholesome contempt for mere bookishness in matters of science, and carried on war to the knife against the stupid methods of education in vogue forty years ago, when students were expected to learn something of chemistry or palæontology by reading about black oxide of manganese or the dentition of anoplotherium. A rash clergyman once, without further equipment in natural history than some desultory reading, attacked the Darwinian theory in some sundry magazine articles, in which he made himself uncommonly merry at Huxley's expense. This was intended to draw the great man's fire; and as the batteries remained silent the author proceeded to write to Huxley, calling his attention to the articles, and at the same time, with mock modesty, asking advice as to the further study of these deep questions. Huxley's answer was brief and to the point, "Take a cockroach and dissect it!"

Too exclusive devotion, however, to scalpel and microscope may leave a man of science narrow and

one-sided, dead to some of the most interesting aspects of human life. But Huxley was keenly alive in all directions, and would have enjoyed mastering all branches of knowledge, if the days had only been long enough. He found rest and recreation in change of themes, and after a long day's scientific work at South Kensington would read Sybel's "French Revolution," or Lange's "History of Materialism," or the last new novel, until the witching hour of midnight. This reading was in various languages. Without a university education, Huxley had a remarkably good knowledge of Latin. He was fond of Spinoza, and every once in a while, in the course of our chats, he would exclaim: "Come, now, let's see what old Benedict has to say about it! There's no better man." Then he would take the book from its shelf, and while we both looked on the page he would give voice to his own comments in a broad and liberal paraphrase, that showed his sound and scholarlike appreciation of every point in the Latin text. A spirited and racy version it would have been, had he ever undertaken to translate Spinoza. So I remember saying once, but he replied, "We must leave it for young Fred Pollock, whom I think you have seen; he is shy and doesn't say much, but I can tell you, whatever he does is sure to be amazingly good." They who are familiar with Sir Frederick Pollock's noble book on Spinoza, to say nothing of his other works, will recognize the truth of the prophecy.

Huxley had also a mastery of French, Italian, and German, and perhaps of some other modern languages. Angelo Heilprin says that he found him

studying Russian, chiefly in order to acquire a thorough familiarity with the work of the great anatomist, Kovalevsky. How far he may have carried that study I know not; but his son tells us that it was also in middle life that he began Greek, in order to read, at first hand, Aristotle and the New Testament. To read Aristotle with critical discernment requires an extremely good knowledge of Greek; and if Huxley got so far as that, we need not be surprised at hearing that he could enjoy the Homeric poems in the original.

I suppose there were few topics in the heavens or on earth that did not get overhauled at that little library fireside. At one time it would be politics, and my friend would thank God that, whatever mistakes he might have made in life, he had never bowed the knee to either of those intolerable humbugs, Louis Napoleon or Benjamin Disraeli. Without admitting that the shifty Jew deserved to be placed on quite so low a plane as Hortense Beauharnais's feeble son, we can easily see how distasteful he would be to a man of Huxley's earnest and whole-souled directness. But antipathy to Disraeli did not in this case mean fondness for Gladstone. In later years, when Huxley was having his great controversy with Gladstone, we find him writing: "Seriously, it is to me a great thing that the destinies of this country should at present be seriously influenced by a man who, whatever he may be in the affairs of which I am no judge, is nothing but a copious shuffler in those which I do understand." In 1773 there occurred a brief passage at arms between Gladstone and Herbert Spencer, in which the great statesman's intellect



looked amusingly small and commonplace in contrast with the giant mind of the philosopher. The defeated party was left with no resources except rhetorical artifice to cover his retreat, and his general aspect was foxy, not to say Jesuitical. At least so Huxley declared, and I thoroughly agreed with him. Yet surely it would be a very inadequate and unjust estimate of Gladstone, which should set him down as a shuffler, and there leave the matter. From the statesman's point of view it might be contended that Gladstone was exceptionally direct and frank. But a statesman is seldom, if ever, called upon to ascertain and exhibit the fundamental facts of a case without bias and in the disinterested mood which Science demands of her votaries. The statesman's business is to accomplish sundry concrete political purposes, and he measures statements primarily, not by their truth, but by their availableness as means toward a practical end. Pure science cultivates a widely different habit of mind. One could no more expect a prime minister, as such, to understand Huxley's attitude in presence of a scientific problem, than a deaf-mute to comprehend a symphony of Beethoven. Gladstone's aim was to score a point against his adversary, at whatever cost, whereas Huxley was as quick to detect his own mistakes as anybody else's; and such differences in temperament were scarcely compatible with mutual understanding.

If absolute loyalty to truth, involving complete self-abnegation in face of the evidence, be the ideal aim of the scientific inquirer, there have been few men in whom that ideal has been so perfectly realized as in Huxley. If ever he were tempted by some fancied



charm of speculation to swerve a hair's breadth from the strict line of fact, the temptation was promptly slaughtered and made no sign. For intellectual integrity, he was a spotless Sir Galahad. I believe there was nothing in life which he dreaded so much, as the sin of allowing his reason to be hoodwinked by personal predilections, or whatever Francis Bacon would have called "idols of the cave." Closely connected with this ever present feeling was a holy horror of *a priori* convictions of logical necessity, and of long festoons of deductive argument suspended from such airy supports. The prime necessity for him was to appeal at every step to observation and experiment, and in the absence of such verification, to rest content with saying, "I do not know." It is to Huxley, I believe, that we owe the epithet "Agnostic," for which all men of scientific proclivities owe him a debt of gratitude, since it happened to please the popular fancy and at once supplanted the label "Positivist" which used to be ruthlessly pasted upon all such men, in spite of their protests and struggles. No better word than "Agnostic" could be found to express Huxley's mental temperament, but with anything like a formulated system of agnosticism he had little more to do than with other "isms." He used to smile at the formidable parade which Lewes was making with his "Objective Method and Verification," in which capital letters did duty for part of the argument; and as for Dean Mansel's elaborate agnosticism, in his "Limits of Religious Thought," Huxley, taking a hint from Hogarth, used to liken him to a (theological) inn-keeper who has climbed upon the sign-board of the rival (scientific) inn, and is busily sawing it off, quite

oblivious of the grewsome fact that he is sitting upon the unsupported end! But while he thus set little store by current agnostic metaphysics, Huxley's intellectual climate, if I may so speak, was one of perfect agnosticism. In intimate converse with him, he always seemed to me a thoroughgoing and splendid representation of Hume; indeed, in his writings he somewhere lets fall a remark expressing a higher regard for Hume than for Kant. It was at this point that we used to part company in our talks: so long as it was a question of Berkeley we were substantially agreed, but when it came to Hume we agreed to differ.

It is this complete agnosticism of temperament, added to his abiding dread of intellectual dishonesty, that explains Huxley's attitude toward belief in a future life. He was not a materialist; nobody saw more clearly than he the philosophic flimsiness of materialism, and he looked with strong disapproval upon the self-complacent negations of Ludwig Buechner. Nevertheless, with regard to the belief in an immortal soul, his position was avowedly agnostic, with perhaps just the slightest possible tacit though reluctant leaning toward the negative. This slight bias was apparently due to two causes. First, it is practically beyond the power of science to adduce evidence in support of the soul's survival of the body, since the whole question lies beyond the bounds of our terrestrial experience. Huxley was the last man to assume that the possibilities of nature are limited by our experience, and I think he would have seen the force of the argument that, in questions where evidence is in the nature of the case inaccessible, our inability to produce it does not afford

even the slightest *prima facie* ground for a negative verdict.<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, he seems to have felt as if the absence of evidence did afford some such *prima facie* ground; for in a letter to Charles Kingsley, written in 1860, soon after the sudden death of his first child, he says: "Had I lived a couple of centuries earlier, I could have fancied a devil scoffing at me . . . and asking me what profit it was to have stripped myself of the hopes and consolations of the mass of mankind. To which my only reply was, and is, O devil! truth is better than much profit. I have searched over the grounds of my belief, and if wife and child and name and fame were all to be lost to me one after the other, as the penalty, still I will not lie." This striking declaration shows that the second cause of the bias was the dread of self-deception. It was a noble exhibition of intellectual honesty raised to a truly Puritanic fervour of self-abnegation. Just because life is sweet, and the love of it well-nigh irrepressible, must all such feelings be suspected as tempters, and frowned out of our temple of philosophy? Rather than run any risk of accepting a belief because it is pleasant, let us incur whatever chance there may be of error in the opposite direction; thus we shall at least avoid the one unpardonable sin. Such, I think, was the shape which the case assumed in Huxley's mind. To me it takes a very different shape; but I cannot help feeling that mankind is going to be helped by such stanch intellectual integrity as his far more than it is going to be helped by consoling doctrines of whatever sort; and therefore his noble self-abnegation, even though it may

<sup>1</sup> I have explained this point at some length in the "Unseen World," pp. 43-53.

have been greater than was called for, is worthy of most profound and solemn homage.

But we did not spend the whole of the evening in the little library. Brierwood and Havana at length gave out, and the drawing-room had its claims upon us. There was a fondness for music in the family, and it was no unusual thing for us to gather around the piano and sing psalms, after which there would perhaps be a Beethoven sonata, or one of Chopin's nocturnes, or perhaps a song. I can never forget the rich contralto voice of one bright and charming daughter, since passed away, or the refrain of an old-fashioned song which she sometimes sang about "My love, that loved me long ago." From music it was an easy transition to scraps of Browning or Goethe, leading to various disquisition. Of mirth and badinage there was always plenty. I dare say there was not another room in London where so much exuberant nonsense might have been heard. It is no uncommon thing for masters of the Queen's English to delight in torturing it, and Huxley enjoyed that sort of pastime as much as James Russell Lowell. "Smole" and "declone" were specimens of the preterites that used to fall from his lips; and as for puns, the air was blue with them. I cannot recall one of them now, but the following example, from a letter of 1855 inviting Hooker to his wedding, will suffice to show the quality: "I terminate my Baccalaureate and take my degree of M. A. trimony (isn't that atrocious?) on Saturday, July 21."

One evening the conversation happened to touch upon the memorable murder of Dr. Parkman by Dr. Webster, and I expressed some surprise that an expert chemist, like Webster, should have been so slow in

getting his victim's remains out of the way. "Well," quoth Huxley, "there's a good deal of substance in a human body. It isn't easy to dispose of so much *corpus delicti*,—a reflection which has frequently deterred me when on the point of killing somebody." At such remarks a soft ripple of laughter would run about the room, with murmurs of "Oh, Pater!" It was just the same in his lectures to his students. In the simple old experiment illustrating reflex action, a frog, whose brain had been removed, was touched upon the right side of the back with a slightly irritating acid, and would forthwith reach up with his right hind leg and rub the place. The next thing in order was to tie the right leg, whereupon the left leg would come up, and by dint of strenuous effort reach the itching spot. One day the stretching was so violent as to result in a particularly elaborate and comical somersault on the part of the frog, whereupon Huxley exclaimed, "You see, it doesn't require much of a brain to be an acrobat!" In an examination on anatomy a very callow lad got the valves of the heart wrong, putting the mitral on the right side; but Huxley took compassion on him, with the remark, "Poor little beggar! I never got them correctly myself until I reflected that a bishop was never in the right!" On another occasion, at the end of a lecture, he asked one of the students if he understood it all. The student replied, "All, sir, but one part, during which you stood between me and the blackboard." "Ah," rejoined Huxley, "I did my best to make myself clear, but could not make myself transparent!"<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> I have here eked out my own reminiscences by instances cited from Leonard Huxley's book.



Probably the most tedious bore on earth is the man who feels it incumbent on him always to be facetious and to turn everything into a joke. Lynch law is about the right sort of thing for such persons. Huxley had nothing in common with them. His drollery was the spontaneous bubbling over of the seething fountains of energy. The world's strongest spirits, from Shakespeare down, have been noted for playfulness. The prim and sober creatures who know neither how to poke fun nor to take it are apt to be the persons who are ridden by their work, — useful mortals after their fashion, mayhap, but not interesting or stimulating. Huxley's playfulness lightened the burden of life for himself and for all with whom he came in contact. I seem to see him now, looking up from his end of the table, — for my place was usually at Mrs. Huxley's end, — his dark eyes kindling under their shaggy brows, and a smile of indescribable beauty spreading over the swarthy face, as prelude to some keen and pithy but never unkind remark. Electric in energy, formidable in his incisiveness, he smote hard; but there was nothing cruel about him, nor did he ever inflict pain through heedless remarks. That would have been a stupidity of which he was incapable. His quickness and sureness of perception, joined with his abounding kindliness, made him a man of almost infinite tact. I had not known him long before I felt that the ruling characteristic in his nature was *tenderness*. He reminded me of one of Charles Reade's heroes, Colonel Dujardin, who had the eye of a hawk, but down somewhere in the depths of that eye of a hawk there was the eye of a dove. It was chiefly the sympathetic quality in the man that exerted upon me an ever



strengthening spell. My experiences in visiting him had one notable feature, which I found it hard to interpret. After leaving the house, at the close of a Sunday evening, the outside world used to seem cold and lonely for being cut off from that presence; yet on the next Sunday, at the moment of his cordial greeting, a feeling always came over me that up to that moment I had never fully taken in how lovable he was, I had never quite done him justice. In other words, no matter how vivid the image which I carried about in my mind, it instantly seemed dim and poor in presence of the reality. Such feelings are known to lovers; in other relations of life they are surely unusual. I was speaking about this to my dear old friend, the late Alexander Macmillan, when he suddenly exclaimed: "You may well feel so, my boy. I tell you, there is so much real Christianity in Huxley that if it were parcelled out among all the men, women, and children in the British Islands, there would be enough to save the soul of every one of them, and plenty to spare!"

I have said that Huxley was never unkind; it is perhaps hardly necessary to tell his readers that he could be sharp and severe, if the occasion required. I have heard his wife say that he never would allow himself to be preyed upon by bores, and knew well how to get rid of them. Some years after the time of which I have been writing, I dined one evening at the Savile Club with Huxley, Spencer, and James Sime. As we were chatting over our coffee, some person unknown to us came in and sat down on a sofa near by. Presently, this man, becoming interested in the conversation, cut short one of our party, and addressed a silly remark to Spencer in reply to something which

he had been saying. Spencer's answer was civil, but brief, and not inviting. Nothing abashed, the stranger kept on, and persisted in forcing himself into the conversation, despite our bleak frowns and arctic glances. It was plain that something must be done, and while the intruder was aiming a question directly at Huxley, the latter turned his back upon him. This was intelligible even to asinine apprehension, and the remainder of our evening was unmolested.

I never knew (not being inquisitive) just when the Huxleys began having their "tall teas" on Sunday evenings; but during their first winter I seldom met any visitors at their house, except once or twice Ray Lankester and Michael Foster. Afterward, Huxley with his wife, on their visit to America, spent a few summer days with my family at Petersham, where the great naturalist learned for the first time what a tin dipper is. Once, in London, in speaking about the starry heavens, I had said that I never could make head or tail of any constellation except the Dipper, and of course everybody must recognize in that the resemblance to a dipper. To my surprise, one of the young ladies asked, "What is a dipper?" My effort at explanation went far enough to evoke the idea of a "ladle," but with that approximation I was fain to let the matter rest until that August day in New England, when, after a tramp in the woods, my friends quaffed cool mountain water from a dipper, and I was told that not only the name, but the thing, is a Yankee notion.

Some time after this I made several visits to England, giving lectures at the Royal Institution and elsewhere, and saw the Huxleys often, and on one

occasion, with my wife, spent a fortnight or so at their home in Marlborough Place. The Sunday evenings had come to be a time for receiving friends, without any of the formality that often attaches to "receptions." Half a dozen or more would drop in for the "high tea." I then noticed the change in the adjective, and observed that the phrase and the institution were not absolutely confined to the Huxley household; but their origin is still for me enshrouded in mystery, like the "empire of the Toltecs." After the informal and jolly supper others would come in, until the company might number from twenty to thirty. Among the men whom I recall to mind (the married ones accompanied by their wives, of course) were Mark Pattison, Lecky, and J. R. Green, Burdon Sanderson and Lauder Brunton, Alma Tadema, Sir James Stephen and his brother Leslie, Sir Frederick Pollock, Lord Arthur Russell, Frederic Harrison, Spencer Walpole, Romanes, and Ralston. Some of these I met for the first time; others were old friends. Nothing could be more charming than the graceful simplicity with which all were entertained, nor could anything be more evident than the affectionate veneration which everybody felt for the host.

The last time that I saw my dear friend was early in 1883, just before coming home to America. I found him lying on the sofa, too ill to say much, but not too ill for a jest or two at his own expense. The series of ailments had begun which were to follow him for the rest of his days. I was much concerned about him, but journeys to England had come to seem such a simple matter that the thought of its being our last meeting never entered my mind. A

few letters passed back and forth with the lapse of years, the last one (in 1894) inquiring when I was likely to be able to come and visit him in the pretty home which he had made in Sussex, where he was busy with "digging in the garden and spoiling grandchildren." When the news of the end came, it was as a sudden and desolating shock.

There were few magazines or newspapers which did not contain articles about Huxley, and in general those articles were considerably more than the customary obituary notice. They were apt to be more animated than usual, as if they had caught something from the blithe spirit of the man; and they gave so many details as to show the warm and widespread interest with which he was regarded. One thing, however, especially struck me. While the writers of these articles seemed familiar with Huxley's philosophical and literary writings, with his popular lectures on scientific subjects and his controversies with sundry clergymen, they seemed to know nothing whatever about his original scientific work. It was really a singular spectacle, if one pauses to think about it. Here are a score of writers engaged in paying tribute to a man as one of the great scientific lights of the age, and yet, while they all know something about what he would have considered his fugitive work, not one of them so much as alludes to the cardinal achievements in virtue of which his name marks an epoch! It is very much as if the biographers of Newton were to enlarge upon his official labours at the Mint and his theory of light, while preserving a dead silence as to gravitation and fluxions. A few words concerning Huxley's work will therefore not

seem superfluous. A few words are all that can here be given; I cannot pretend even to make a well-rounded sketch.

In one respect there was a curious similarity between the beginnings of Huxley's scientific career and of Darwin's. Both went, as young men, on long voyages into the southern hemisphere, in ships of the royal navy, and from the study of organisms encountered on these voyages both were led to theories of vast importance. Huxley studied with keen interest and infinite patience the jellyfish and polyps floating on the surface of the tropical seas through which his ship passed. Without books or advisers, and with scant aid of any sort except his microscope, which had to be tied to keep it steady, he scrutinized and dissected these lowly forms of life, and made drawings and diagrams illustrating the intricacies of their structure, until he was able, by comparison, to attain some very interesting results. During four years, he says, "I sent home communication after communication to the Linnæan Society, with the same result as that obtained by Noah when he sent the raven out of his ark. Tired at last of hearing nothing about them, I determined to do or die, and in 1849 I drew up a more elaborate paper, and forwarded it to the Royal Society." This was a memoir *On the Anatomy and the Affinities of the Family of Medusæ*; and it proved to be his dove, though he did not know it until his return to England, a year later. Then he found that his paper had been published, and in 1851, at the age of twenty-six, he was made a Fellow of the Royal Society. He went on writing papers giving sundry results of his observations, and the very next year received the society's Royal



medal, a supreme distinction which he shared with Joule, Stokes, and Humboldt. In the address upon the presentation of the medal, the president, Lord Rosse, declared that Huxley had not only for the first time adequately described the Medusæ and laid down rational principles for classifying them, but had inaugurated "a process of reasoning, the results of which can scarcely yet be anticipated, but must bear in a very important degree upon some of the most abstruse points of what may be called transcendental physiology."

In other words, the youthful Huxley had made a discovery that went to the bottom of things; and as in most if not all such cases, he had enlarged our knowledge, not only of facts, but of methods. It was the beginning of a profound reconstruction of the classification of animals, extinct and living. In the earlier half of the century the truest classification was Cuvier's. That great genius emancipated himself from the notion that groups of animals should be arranged in an ascending or descending series, and he fully proved the existence of three divergent types,—Vertebrata, Mollusca, and Articulata. Some of the multitude of animals lower or less specialized than these he grouped by mistake along with Mollusca or Articulata, while all the rest he threw into a fourth class, which he called Radiata. It was evident that this type was far less clearly defined than the three higher types. In fact, it was open to the same kind of objection that used to be effectively urged against Max Müller's so-called Turanian group of languages: it was merely a negation. Radiata were simply animals that were neither Articulata nor Mollusca nor Vertebrata; in short, they were

a motley multitude, about which there was a prevailing confusion of ideas at the time when young Huxley began the study of jellyfish.

We all know how it was the work of the great Esthonian embryologist, Baer, that turned Herbert Spencer toward his discovery of the law of evolution. It is therefore doubly interesting to know that in these early studies Huxley also profited by his knowledge of Baer's methods and results. It all tended toward a theory of evolution, although Baer himself never got so far as evolution in the modern sense; and as for Huxley, when he studied *Medusæ*, he was not concerned with any general theory whatever, but only with putting into shape what he saw.

And what he saw was that throughout their development the *Medusæ* consist of two foundation membranes, or delicate weblike tissues of cells, — one forming the outer integument, the other doing duty as stomach lining, — and that there was no true body cavity with blood-vessels. He showed that groups apparently quite dissimilar, such as the hydroid and ser-tularian polyps, the *Physophoridæ* and sea anemones, are constructed upon the same plan; and so he built up his famous group of *Cœlenterata*, or animals with only a stomach cavity, as contrasted with all higher organisms, which might be called *Cœlomata*, or animals with a true body cavity, containing a stomach with other viscera and blood-vessels. In all *Cœlomata*, from the worm up to man, there is a third foundation membrane.

Thus the Cuvierian group of *Radiata* was broken up, and the way was prepared for this far more profound and true arrangement: (1) *Protozoa*, such as the *amœba* and sponges, in which there is no distinct separation

of parts performing different functions; (2) Cœlenterata, in which there is a simple differentiation between the inside, which accumulates energy, and the outside, which expends it; and (3) Cœlomata, in which the inside contains a more or less elaborate system of distinct organs devoted to nutrition and reproduction, while the outside is more or less differentiated into limbs and sense organs for interaction with the outer world. Though not yet an evolutionist, Huxley could not repress the prophetic thought that Cœlenterata are ancient survivals, representing a stage through which higher animal types must once have passed.

As further elaborated by Huxley, the development above the cœlenterate stage goes on in divergent lines; stopping abruptly in some directions, in others going on to great lengths. Thus, in the direction taken by echinoderms, the physical possibilities are speedily exhausted, and we stop with starfishes and holothurians. But among Annuloida, as Huxley called them, there is more flexibility, and we keep on till we reach the true Articulata in the highly specialized insects, arachnoids, and crustaceans. It is still more interesting to follow the Molluscoida, through which we are led, on the one hand, to the true Mollusca, reaching their culmination in the nautilus and octopus, and on the other hand to the Tunicata, and so on to the vertebrates.

In the comparative anatomy of vertebrates, also, Huxley's achievements were in a high degree original and remarkable. First in importance, perhaps, was his classification of birds, in which their true position and relationships were for the first time disclosed. Huxley showed that all birds, extinct and living, must be arranged in three groups, of which the first is repre-

sented by the fossil archæopteryx with its hand-like wing and lizard-like tail, the second by the ostrich and its congeners, and the third by all other living birds. He further demonstrated the peculiarly close relationship between birds and reptiles through the extinct dinosaurs. In all these matters his powerful originality was shown in the methods by which these important results were reached. Every new investigation which he made seemed to do something toward raising the study of biology to a higher plane, as for example his celebrated controversy with Owen on the true nature of the vertebrate skull. The mention of Owen reminds us that it was also Huxley who overthrew Cuvier's order of *Quadrumania*, by proving that apes are not four-handed, but have two hands and two feet; he showed that neither in limbs nor in brain does man present differences from other primates that are of higher than generic value. Indeed, there were few corners of the animal world, past or present, which Huxley did not at some time or other overhaul, and to our knowledge of which he did not make contributions of prime importance. The instances here cited may serve to show the kind of work which he did, but my mention of them is necessarily meagre. In the department of classification, the significance of which has been increased tenfold by the doctrine of evolution, his name must surely rank foremost among the successors of the mighty Cuvier.

Before 1860 the vastness and accuracy of Huxley's acquirements and the soundness of his judgment were well understood by the men of his profession, insomuch that Charles Darwin, when about to publish "*The Origin of Species*," said that there were three men in

England upon whose judgment he relied; if he could convince those three, he could afford to wait for the rest. The three were Lyell, Hooker, and Huxley, and he convinced them. How sturdily Huxley fought Darwin's battles is inspiring to remember. Darwin rather shrank from controversy, and, while he welcomed candid criticism, seldom took any notice of ill-natured attacks. On one occasion, nevertheless, a somewhat ugly assault moved Darwin to turn and rend the assailant, which was easily and neatly done in two pages at the end of a scientific paper. Before publishing the paper, however, Darwin sent it to Huxley, authorizing him to omit the two pages if he should think it best. Huxley promptly cancelled them, and sent Darwin a delicious little note, saying that the retort was so excellent that if it had been his own he should hardly have had virtue enough to suppress it; but although it was well deserved, he thought it would be better to refrain. "If I say a savage thing, it is only 'pretty Fanny's way'; but if you do, it is not likely to be forgotten." There was a friend worth having!

There can be little doubt, I think, that, without a particle of rancour, Huxley did keenly feel the *gaudium certaminis*. He exclaimed among the trumpets, Ha! ha! and was sure to be in the thickest of the fight. His family seemed to think that the "Gladstonian dose" had a tonic effect upon him. When he felt too ill for scientific work, he was quite ready for a scrimmage with his friends the bishops. Not caring much for episcopophagy (as Huxley once called it), and feeling that controversy of that sort was but a slaying of the slain, I used to grudge the time that was given to it and taken from other things. In 1879 he showed



me the synopsis of a projected book on "The Dog," which was to be an original contribution to the phylogenetic history of the order Carnivora. The reader who recalls his book on "The Crayfish" may realize what such a book about dogs would have been. It was interrupted and deferred, and finally pushed aside, by the thousand and one duties and cares that were thrust upon him, — work on government commissions, educational work, parish work, everything that a self-sacrificing and public-spirited man could be loaded with. In the later years, whenever I opened a magazine and found one of the controversial articles, I read it with pleasure, but sighed for the dog book.

I dare say, though, it was all for the best. "To smite all humbugs, however big; to give a nobler tone to science; to set an example of abstinence from petty personal controversies, and of toleration for everything but lying; to be indifferent as to whether the work is recognized as mine or not, so long as it is done," — such were Huxley's aims in life. And for these things, in the words of good Ben Jonson, "I loved the man, and do honour to his memory, on this side idolatry, as much as any."

VII

HERBERT SPENCER'S SERVICE TO  
RELIGION



## VII

### HERBERT SPENCER'S SERVICE TO RELIGION<sup>1</sup>

*"Evolution and religion: that which perfects humanity cannot destroy religion."* — Mr. President and Gentlemen: The thought which you have uttered suggests so many and such fruitful themes of discussion, that a whole evening would not suffice to enumerate them, while to illustrate them properly would seem to require an octavo volume rather than a talk of six or eight minutes, especially when such a talk comes just after dinner. The Amazulu saying which you have cited, that those who have "stuffed bodies" cannot see hidden things, seems peculiarly applicable to any attempt to discuss the mysteries of religion at the present moment; and, after the additional warning we have just had from our good friend Mr. Schurz, I hardly know whether I ought to venture to approach so vast a theme. There are one or two points of sig-

<sup>1</sup>This address was delivered by Dr. Fiske at the farewell banquet to Mr. Spencer given at Delmonico's on the evening of November 9, 1882, the Hon. William M. Evarts presiding. At its conclusion, Mr. Spencer, who sat near Dr. Fiske, partly rose in his chair and said, "*Fiske, should you develop to the fullest the ideas you have expressed here this evening, I should regard it as a fitting supplement to my life work.*" A full report of the proceedings at the banquet, prepared in pamphlet form by Professor E. L. Youmans, under the title "Herbert Spencer on the Americans, and the Americans on Herbert Spencer," was published by D. Appleton & Company in 1883.

nal importance, however, to which I may at least call attention for a moment. It is a matter which has long since taken deep hold of my mind, and I am glad to have a chance to say something about it on so fitting an occasion. We have met here this evening to do homage to a dear and noble teacher and friend, and it is well that we should choose this time to recall the various aspects of the immortal work by which he has earned the gratitude of a world. The work which Herbert Spencer has done in organizing the different departments of human knowledge, so as to present the widest generalizations of all the sciences in a new and wonderful light, as flowing out of still deeper and wider truths concerning the universe as a whole; the great number of profound generalizations which he has established incidentally to the pursuit of this main object; the endlessly rich and suggestive thoughts which he has thrown out in such profusion by the wayside all along the course of this great philosophical enterprise—all this work is so manifest that none can fail to recognize it. It is work of the caliber of that which Aristotle and Newton did; though coming in this latter age, it as far surpasses their work in its vastness of performance as the railway surpasses the sedan chair, or as the telegraph surpasses the carrier-pigeon. But it is not of this side of our teacher's work that I wish to speak, but of a side of it that has, hitherto, met with less general recognition.

There are some people who seem to think that it is not enough that Mr. Spencer should have made all these priceless contributions to human knowledge, but actually complain of him for not giving us a complete



and exhaustive system of theology into the bargain.<sup>1</sup> What I wish, therefore, to point out is that Mr. Spencer's work on the side of religion will be seen to be no less important than his work on the side of science, when once its religious implications shall have been fully and consistently unfolded. If we look at all the systems or forms of religion of which we have any knowledge, we shall find that they differ in many superficial features. They differ in many of the transcendental doctrines which they respectively preach, and in many of the rules of conduct which they respectively lay down for men's guidance. They assert different things about the universe, and they enjoin or prohibit different kinds of behaviour on the part of their followers. The doctrine of the Trinity, which to most Christians is the most sacred of mysteries, is to all Mohammedans the foulest of blasphemies; the Brahman's conscience would be more troubled if he were to kill a cow by accident, than if he were to swear to a lie or steal a purse; the Turk, who sees no wrong in bigamy, would shrink from the sin of eating pork. But, amid all such surface differences, we find throughout all known religions two points of substantial agreement. And these two points of agreement will be admitted by modern civilized men to be of far greater importance than the innumerable differences of detail.

<sup>1</sup> "It is clear that many persons have derived from Spencer's use of the word Unknowable an impression that he intends by metaphysics to refine God away into nothing, whereas he no more cherishes any such intention than did St. Paul, when he asked, 'Who hath known the mind of the Lord, or who hath been his counsellor'; no more than Isaiah did when he declared, 'Even as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are Jehovah's ways higher than our ways and his thoughts than our thoughts.'" — JOHN FISKE, "Through Nature to God."

All religions agree in the two following assertions, one of which is of speculative and one of which is of ethical importance. One of them serves to sustain and harmonize our thoughts about the world we live in, and our place in that world; the other serves to uphold us in our efforts to do each what we can to make human life more sweet, more full of goodness and beauty, than we find it. The first of these assertions is the proposition that the things and events of the world do not exist or occur blindly or irrelevantly, but that all, from the beginning to the end of time, and throughout the furthest sweep of illimitable space, are connected together as the orderly manifestations of a divine Power, and that this divine Power is something outside of ourselves, and upon it our own existence from moment to moment depends. The second of these assertions is the proposition that men ought to do certain things, and ought to refrain from doing certain other things; and that the reason why some things are wrong to do and other things are right to do is in some mysterious, but very real, way connected with the existence and nature of this divine Power, which reveals itself in every great and every tiny thing, without which not a star courses in its mighty orbit, and not a sparrow falls to the ground. Matthew Arnold once summed up these two propositions very well when he defined God as "an eternal Power, not ourselves, that makes for righteousness." This twofold assertion, that there is an eternal Power that is not ourselves, and that this Power makes for righteousness, is to be found, either in a rudimentary or in a highly developed state, in all known religions. In such religions as those of the Esquimaux or of

your friends the Amazulus, Mr. President, this assertion is found in a rudimentary shape on each of its two sides,— the speculative side and the ethical side; in such religions as Buddhism or Judaism it is found in a highly developed shape on both its sides. But the main point is that in all religions you find it in some shape or other. I said, a moment ago, that modern civilized men will all acknowledge that this two-sided assertion, in which all religions agree, is of far greater importance than any of the superficial points in which religions differ. It is really of much more concern to us that there is an eternal Power, not ourselves, that makes for righteousness, than that such a Power is onefold or threefold in its metaphysical nature, or that we ought not to play cards on Sunday, or to eat meat on Friday. No one, I believe, will deny so simple and clear a statement as this. But it is not only we modern men, who call ourselves enlightened, that will agree to this. I doubt not even the narrow-minded bigots of days now happily gone by would have been made to agree to it if they could have had some doggedly persistent Socrates to cross-question them. Calvin was willing to burn Servetus for doubting the doctrine of the Trinity, but I do not suppose that even Calvin would have argued that the belief in God's threefold nature was more fundamental than the belief in His existence and His goodness. The philosophical error with him was that he could not dissociate the less important doctrine from the more important doctrine, and the fate of the latter seemed to him wrapped up with the fate of the former. I cite this merely as a typical example. What men in past times have really valued in their religion has been

the universal twofold assertion that there is a God, who is pleased with the sight of the just man and is angry with the wicked every day, and when men have fought with one another, and murdered or calumniated one another for heresy about the Trinity or about eating meat on Friday, it has been because they have supposed belief in the non-essential doctrines to be inseparably connected with belief in the essential doctrine. In spite of all this, however, it is true that in the mind of the uncivilized man, the great central truths of religion are so densely overlaid with hundreds of trivial notions respecting dogma and ritual, that his perception of the great central truths is obscure. These great central truths, indeed, need to be clothed in a dress of little rites and superstition, in order to take hold of his dull and untrained intelligence. But in proportion as men become more civilized, and learn to think more accurately, and to take wider views of life, just so do they come to value the essential truths of religion more highly, while they attach less and less importance to superficial details.

Having thus seen what is meant by the essential truths of religion, it is very easy to see what the attitude of the doctrine of evolution is toward these essential truths. It asserts and reiterates them both; and it asserts them not as dogmas handed down to us by priestly tradition, not as mysterious intuitive convictions of which we can render no account to ourselves, but as scientific truths concerning the innermost constitution of the universe—truths that have been disclosed by observation and reflection, like other scientific truths, and that accordingly harmonize naturally

and easily with the whole body of our knowledge. The doctrine of evolution asserts, as the widest and deepest truth which the study of nature can disclose to us, that there exists a power to which no limit in time or space is conceivable, and that all the phenomena of the universe, whether they be what we call material or what we call spiritual phenomena, are manifestations of this infinite and eternal Power. Now this assertion, which Mr. Spencer has so elaborately set forth as a scientific truth—nay, as the ultimate truth of science, as the truth upon which the whole structure of human knowledge philosophically rests—this assertion is identical with the assertion of an eternal Power, not ourselves, that forms the speculative basis of all religions. When Carlyle speaks of the universe as in very truth the star-domed city of God, and reminds us that through every crystal and through every grass blade, but most through every living soul, the glory of a present God still beams, he means pretty much the same thing that Mr. Spencer means, save that he speaks with the language of poetry, with language coloured by emotion, and not with the precise, formal, and colourless language of science. By many critics who forget that names are but the counters rather than the hard money of thought, objections have been raised to the use of such a phrase as the Unknowable, whereby to describe the power that is manifest in every event of the universe. Yet, when the Hebrew prophet declared that “by him were laid the foundations of the deep,” but reminded us “Who by searching can find him out?” he meant pretty much what Mr. Spencer means when he speaks of a power that is inscrutable in itself, yet is revealed from moment



to moment in every throb of the mighty rhythmic life of the universe.

And this brings me to the last and most important point of all. What says the doctrine of evolution with regard to the ethical side of this twofold assertion that lies at the bottom of all religion? Though we cannot fathom the nature of the inscrutable Power that animates the world, we know, nevertheless, a great many things that it does. Does this eternal Power, then, work for righteousness? Is there a divine sanction for holiness and a divine condemnation for sin? Are the principles of right living really connected with the intimate constitution of the universe? If the answer of science to these questions be affirmative, then the agreement with religion is complete, both on the speculative and on the practical side; and that phantom which has been the abiding terror of timid and superficial minds — that phantom of the hostility between religion and science — is exorcised now and forever. Now, science began to return a decisively affirmative answer to such questions as these when it began, with Mr. Spencer, to explain moral beliefs and moral sentiments as products of evolution. For clearly, when you say of a moral belief or a moral sentiment, that it is a product of evolution, you imply that it is something which the universe through untold ages has been labouring to bring forth, and you ascribe to it a value proportionate to the enormous effort it has cost to produce it. Still more, when with Mr. Spencer we study the principles of right living as part and parcel of the whole doctrine of the development of life upon the earth; when we see that in an ultimate analysis that is right which tends to enhance fulness of life, and

that is wrong which tends to detract from fulness of life — we then see that the distinction between right and wrong is rooted in the deepest foundations of the universe; we see that the very same forces, subtle, and exquisite, and profound, which brought upon the scene the primal germs of life and caused them to unfold, which through countless ages of struggle and death has cherished the life that could live more perfectly and destroyed the life that could only live less perfectly, until humanity, with all its hopes, and fears, and aspirations, has come into being as the crown of all this stupendous work — we see that these very same subtle and exquisite forces have wrought into the very fibres of the universe those principles of right living which it is man's highest function to put into practice. The theoretical sanction thus given to right living is incomparably the most powerful that has ever been assigned in any philosophy of ethics. Human responsibility is made more strict and solemn than ever, when the eternal Power that lives in every event of the universe is thus seen to be in the deepest possible sense the author of the moral law that should guide our lives, and in obedience to which lies our only guarantee of the happiness which is incorruptible — which neither inevitable misfortune nor unmerited obloquy can ever take away. I have but rarely touched upon a rich and suggestive topic. When this subject shall once have been expounded and illustrated with due thoroughness — as I earnestly hope it will be within the next few years — then I am sure it will be generally acknowledged that our great teacher's services to religion have been no less signal than his services to science, unparalleled as these have been in all the history of the world.



VIII

JOHN TYNDALL





## VIII

### JOHN TYNDALL

THE recent death of Professor Tyndall has removed from us a man of preëminent scientific and literary power, an early advocate and expositor of the doctrine of evolution, and one of the most genial and interesting personalities that could anywhere be found. It seems to me that this meeting of a club devoted to the study of evolution is a fitting occasion for a few words respecting Tyndall in these different capacities, — as a scientific inquirer, as an evolutionist, and as a man.

Tyndall was born in August, 1820, and was therefore four months younger than his friend, Herbert Spencer, whose seventy-fourth birthday will come on the twenty-seventh of next month. Tyndall's strong interest in science, like Spencer's, was manifested in boyhood, and there were some curious points of likeness between the early careers of the two. Neither went to college or studied according to the ordinary routine, and both received marked intellectual stimulus from their fathers. As Spencer was engaged in civil engineering from the age of seventeen to that of one-and-twenty, during which time he took part in building the London and Birmingham Railroad, so Tyndall from nineteen to twenty-four was employed in the ordnance survey, and then for three years worked at civil engineering. Both went a good way in the study of mathematics, but the differences in

their dominant tastes were already shown. As a boy, Spencer was deeply interested in the rearing of insects and studying their transformations, while he also achieved no mean proficiency as a botanist. Tyndall, on the other hand, was from the first very much absorbed in molecular physics. The dance of molecules and atoms, in its varied figures, had an irresistible attraction for him. In 1848, after giving up his position as a civil engineer, he went to the University of Marburg, where he received a doctor's degree in 1851. His work at the university consisted chiefly of original investigations on the relations of magnetism and diamagnetism to molecular arrangement. It resulted in a paper published in the *Philosophical Magazine* in 1850, which at once made Tyndall famous. It showed the qualities for which his work was ever afterward distinguished. As Huxley says of him: "That which he knew, he knew thoroughly, had turned over on all sides, and probed through and through. Whatever subject he took up, he never rested till he had attained a clear conception of all the conditions and processes involved, or had satisfied himself that it was not attainable. And in dealing with physical problems, I really think that he, in a manner, saw the atoms and molecules, and 'felt their pushes and pulls.'"

When, after a further year of work at the University of Berlin, Tyndall returned to England, he was at once elected a Fellow of the Royal Society, and one of the secretaries of the physical section of the British Association, distinguished honours for a young man of two-and-thirty. In the following year he was appointed Fullerian Professor of Physics in the Royal Institution.

This gave him command of a magnificent laboratory with which to pursue his investigations. Faraday was then Director of the Institution, so that for the next fourteen years the two men were brought into close relations. A more delightful situation for a scientific investigator can hardly be imagined. It was in 1851 and 1852, just as this career of work in London was beginning, that Tyndall became acquainted with Spencer, who, as already observed, was about his own age, and with Huxley, who was five years younger. This was the beginning of friendships of the most intimate sort; the mutual respect and affection between the three was always charming to contemplate. On all sorts of minor topics they were liable to differ in opinion, and they never hesitated a moment about criticising or attacking each other. The atmosphere of the room in which those three men were gathered was not likely to be an atmosphere of monotonous assent; the enlivening spice of controversy was seldom far away; but the fundamental harmony between them was profound, for all cared immeasurably more for truth than for anything else. It was no small intellectual boon in life, no trifling moral support, for either of those men to have the friendship of the other two.

Of Tyndall's original scientific work, an important part related to the explanation of the causes and nature of the motion of glaciers. His contributions to this difficult and important subject were of the highest value. These investigations led him to visit the Alps almost every year from 1856 until the close of his life, though long before the end the views set forth by him in 1860 had come to be generally accepted. The explorations in the Alps gave Tyndall a fine opportunity

to indulge his propensity for climbing. It was not at all difficult to imagine him descended from a creature arboreal in its habits. He was very strong in the arms and fingers, while his weight, I should think, could hardly have exceeded one hundred and thirty, or at most one hundred and forty pounds. He would scamper up steep places like a cat. One of the Cunard captains told me that once when Tyndall crossed the ocean in his steamer, he had secured special permission to climb in the rigging, and seemed never so much at home as when slipping up between crosstrees or hanging upon a yard-arm.

In 1867, on Faraday's death, Tyndall succeeded him as Director of the Royal Institution, and soon afterward began his remarkable series of inquiries into the cause of the changing colours of the ocean. This led to inquiries into the light of the sky, and the discovery that its blue colour is due to the reflection of certain rays of light from the tiny surfaces of countless particles of matter floating in the atmosphere. This opened the door to studies of the organic matter held in suspension in the atmosphere, and to the relations between dust and disease, a most fruitful subject. In the course of these studies occurred the famous controversy on Spontaneous Generation, in which Dr. Bastian contended that sundry low forms of life detected in hermetically sealed flasks must have been newly generated from organizable materials within the flask; against which view Tyndall proved that no one has yet sealed a flask so hermetically that germs cannot enter. It was the same question which had been argued in France between Pouchet and Pasteur; but Tyndall's researches strengthened the case against

spontaneous generation, and materially helped the new and epoch-making germ theory of disease.

Another grand division of Tyndall's work relates to radiant heat. His work on this subject began in 1859, and was kept up during the greater part of his life. Perhaps the most important part of it was comprised in his researches on the transmutation of the dark heat rays below the red end of the spectrum and their relations to the luminous rays. But upon these and sundry points in optics and acoustics to which Tyndall made notable contributions I do not feel competent to speak.

Among those of Tyndall's books which have a place in literature as well as in science, "Heat considered as a Mode of Motion" is doubtless the most eminent. At the time when it was published, in 1863, the doctrines of the correlation of forces and the conservation of energy were still among the novelties, and the researches of Joule, Helmholtz, and Mayer, which had done so much to establish them, were not generally understood. Tyndall's book came in the nick of time; it was a masterpiece of scientific exposition such as had not been seen for many a day; and it did more than any other book to make men familiar with those all-pervading physical truths that lie at the bottom of the doctrine of evolution. This book, moreover, showed Tyndall not only as a master in physical investigation, but as an eminent literary artist and one of the best writers of English prose that our age has seen.

Tyndall's other direct connections with the exposition of evolution have consisted mainly in detached statements of special points from time to time in brief



essays or lectures. The most famous of these was the Belfast Address, delivered in 1874, which created so much commotion for a short time. The cry of "materialism," which then resounded so loudly, would now, I imagine, disturb very few people. So effective was it then in some quarters that in one of Tyndall's letters I find that Cardinal Cullen appointed a three days' fast, in order to keep infidelity out of Ireland.

My *new* acquaintance with Tyndall began in 1872, when he was giving a course of lectures at the Lowell Institute in Boston. I had never been in England, but I had been in friendly correspondence with Herbert Spencer for several years, so that I found the acquaintance with Tyndall was virtually made already, and we at once became warm friends.

His success as a lecturer was complete. At first he was a little in danger from feeling in doubt as to the intellectual level of his audiences,—a doubt which has played the mischief with some British lecturers in America. The late Mr. Freeman, for example, thought it necessary to instruct his audiences in Boston and St. Louis in the rudiments of English history, and was voted a bore for his pains, when there was so much he might have said to which people would have listened with breathless interest. Tyndall received early warning to talk exactly as he would at the Royal Institution. His illustrative experiments were beautifully done, his speech was easy and eloquent, and his manner, so frank and earnest and kindly, was extremely winning. It was a rare treat to hear him lecture.

Tyndall, though far from wealthy, was always in easy circumstances and was remarkably generous. I have read scores of his business letters to Youmans and



the Appletons, since I have been writing the Life of Youmans,<sup>1</sup> and I have been struck with the fact that the question of payment never seemed to be in Tyndall's mind. Before he came over here he told Youmans that nothing would induce him to carry away a cent of American money. His one lecture season earned about \$13,000 for him, and that he left in the hands of trustees as a fund for helping the study of the natural sciences in America.

The next year I went to England and spent most of a year in London. Then I saw much of Tyndall, as well as of Spencer and Huxley. I dined with them once at their famous X Club, of which the six other members were Hooker, Busk, Frankland, Lubbock, Hirst, and Spottiswoode. As Spencer says, "out of this nine [he himself] was the only one who was fellow of no society and had presided over nothing." It was a jolly company. They dined together once a month, and the ordering of a dinner was usually entrusted to Spencer, who was an expert in gastronomy, and as eminent in the synthesis of a *menu* as in any other branch of synthetic philosophy. Tyndall abounded in good humour and was then as always one of the merriest of the party. We often met, sometimes with Clifford and Lewes, at dainty little suppers in Spencer's lodgings, or at Sunday evening teas at Huxley's, on which occasions I have known men berated as materialists to join in singing psalm-tunes. But one of the best places to hobnob with Tyndall was in his own lodgings at the top of the Royal Institution, on Albemarle Street, the rooms which had once been

<sup>1</sup> "Edward Livingston Youmans," by John Fiske. D. Appleton & Company, 1894.

occupied by Sir Humphry Davy and then by Faraday. It was always an inspiration to go there. In those days Tyndall kept bachelor's hall, and it was his regular habit, year after year, to dine with Spencer and Hirst at the Athenæum Club. But at length, in the course of his Alpine scrambles, he met the charming and accomplished lady who, in 1875, became his wife. She must have been twenty years younger than himself. She was daughter of Lord Claud Hamilton, member of a well-known Scottish family, and thereby hung a little incident which used to make us all laugh. The association between Tyndall and Huxley long ago became in some people's minds so close as to identify the one with the other. So when Huxley and his wife, who had been married nearly thirty years and had seven children, came to America in 1876, one of the New York papers gravely heralded the arrival of Huxley with his titled bride!<sup>1</sup> And this sort of blunder is not peculiar to America. In a recent letter, Huxley tells me that since Tyndall's death he has read in a religious paper an obituary notice in which he [Huxley] figures instead of his friend, and is roundly vituperated for his flagrant heresies.

The last time I ever saw Tyndall was when I was last in England, in 1883. He was then living with his wife in those same old rooms at the Royal Institution, and there I dined with them and spent several evenings.

<sup>1</sup> This incident is mentioned in "Reminiscences of Huxley," p. 200.

IX

EVOLUTION AND THE PRESENT AGE



## IX

### EVOLUTION AND THE PRESENT AGE

It has now for many years been a matter of common remark that we are living in a wonderful age, an age which has witnessed extraordinary material and intellectual progress. This is a mere commonplace, but it is not until we have given some close attention to the facts that we realize the dimensions of the truth which it expresses. The chief characteristics of the nineteenth century may be said to have been on the material side the creation of mechanical force, and on the intellectual side the unification of nature. Neither of these expressions is quite free from objections, but they will sufficiently serve the purpose. When we consider the creation of mechanical force, it is clear that what has been done in this direction since the days of James Watt marks an era immeasurably greater than that of the rise or fall of any historic empire. It marks an era as sharp and bold as that era which witnessed the domestication of oxen and horses far back in the dim prehistoric past. Man was but a feeble creature when his only means of carriage was his two feet, and his tools were such as a wooden stick for a crowbar and a stone for cracking nuts, and his diet was limited to fruit and herbs, or such fish as he could catch in shallow waters and devour without cooking. Countless poets have celebrated the day when he first learned how to strike a spark from the stone and kindle a fire.

The remembrance of it, indeed, hovers over many a system of ancient mythology, where the Prometheus who brings to mankind the good gift of fire is apt to be associated with the Dionysus who teaches him how to ferment his drinks. A great step forward it was when the invention of the bow and arrow enabled him to slay his foes at a distance, and greatly increase his supply of game; another great step it was when the water-tight baskets, and still better, the kettle of baked clay, enabled him to boil his roots and herbs, his fish and flesh; all these were stages in progress that mark long eras in that remote past which we call the Stone Age.

During all those weary stages man could control only such mechanical force as was supplied by his own muscles, eked out here and there by the rudest forms of lever and wedge, roller and pulley, such as are found in the absence of tools, or perhaps by the physical strength of his fellow-men, if he were so fortunate as to control it. But a time came when man learned how to turn to his own uses the gigantic strength of oxen and horses, and when that day came it was such an era as the world had never before witnessed. So great and so manifold were the results of this advancement, that doubtless they furnished the principal explanation of the fact that the human race developed so much more rapidly in the eastern hemisphere than in the western. In my book on the Discovery of America, I have shown that at the time when the western hemisphere was visited by the Europeans of the sixteenth century after Christ its foremost races, in the highlands of Mexico, Central America, and Peru, had in respect of material progress reached a point



nearly abreast of that which had been attained in Egypt and Babylonia, perhaps seven thousand or eight thousand years before Christ; and this difference of nine or ten millenniums in advancement can be to a very considerable extent explained by the absence of horses and oxen in the western hemisphere. If such a statement surprises you, just stop and consider what an immense part of our modern civilization goes back by linear stages of succession to the era of pastoral life, that state of society which is described for us in the book of Genesis and in the Odyssey; then try to imagine what the history of the world as we know it would have been without that pastoral stage. But I must not tarry over this point. Another great stage was marked by the smelting of iron, and yet another by the invention of writing; the latter being on the intellectual side of progress an equivalent for the acquisition of ox and horse power on the material side.

Now this invention of writing seems very ancient, for the city of Nippur contains tablets which may be eight thousand or nine thousand years old, yet which are perfectly legible for modern scholars. The interval is not a long one when measured by the existence of the human race, yet it naturally seems long to our untaught minds because it includes and contains the whole of recorded human history. Here we come upon one of the things which the doctrine of evolution is doing for us. It is altering our perspective; it is teaching us that the whole of recorded history is but a narrow fringe upon the stupendous canvas along which the existence of humanity stretches back; and thus it is profoundly modifying our view of man in his relations to the universe.

Be it long or short, the next epoch-marking change experienced by mankind after the dawn of civilization was the invention of the steam engine by James Watt. The impulse to this stupendous invention was given by Joseph Black's discovery of latent heat, one of the first long strides that was made into the region of molecular physics. From Black and Watt down to the latest discoveries in electricity there has been an unbroken sequence of achievement, and its fundamental characteristic has been the creation of mechanical force or motor energy. This has become possible through our increased knowledge of the interior constitution of matter. Having learned something about the habits and proclivities of atoms and molecules, we are taking advantage of this knowledge to accumulate vast quantities of force and turn it in directions prescribed by human aims and wants. This may properly be called creation, in the same sense that a poem or a symphony is created. We apply the qualities of matter to the achievement of results impossible save through the intervention of man.

The most striking fact about this voluntary creation of motor energy is the sudden and enormous extension which it has given to human power over the world in innumerable ways. It has been well said that our world at the present day is much smaller and more snug than the world in the time of Herodotus, inasmuch as a man can now travel the whole length of the earth's circumference in less time than it would have taken Herodotus to go the length of the Mediterranean, and not only in less time, but with much less discomfort and peril and with fewer needful changes of speech. This is very true, but it could not have been said a

hundred years ago. The change has occurred close upon our own time.

When the postal service was inaugurated between New York and Boston in 1673 by Governor Lovelace, it took a month to cover the distance on horseback, and people were fain to be content with letters and news a month old. Midway between that time and the present, in the days when a group of statesmen assembled at Philadelphia were framing our federal constitution, the distance between New York and Boston had been reduced from a month to a week, and a single stage-coach starting daily from each end of the route sufficed for all the passengers and all the freight between the two cities except such bulky freight as went by sea. Now the fact that we can go from New York to Paris or to Vancouver Island within the compass of a week brings with it many far-reaching consequences. Politically, it gives to a nation like our own, spread over three million square miles of territory, such advantages as were formerly confined to small states like the republics of ancient Greece, or of Italy and the Netherlands in the Middle Ages. It is perpetually bringing people into contact with new faces, new climes, new forms of speech, new habits of thought, thus making the human mind more flexible than of old, more hospitable toward new ideas, more friendly to strangers. But these are not the only effects. Not only have numerous petty manufactures, formerly carried on in separate households, given place to gigantic factories, but the organization of every form of industry has been profoundly modified by railways and telegraphs. It becomes easier in many instances to do things directly that would once have been done by proxy, or, if

agencies are resorted to, they can be established where once they would not have paid; materials are employed which the cost of transportation would once have made inaccessible; great commercial houses at distant points supersede small ones near at hand, while vast sections of farming and grazing country are brought near to metropolitan markets thousands of miles off; and thus in these various ways the tendency is to specialize industries in the places where they can best be conducted. The net result is a marked increase in the comfort of the great mass of people. A given amount of human effort can secure a much greater number of the products of industry, so that life is on its material side variously enriched.

But there are other ways of creating motor energy besides utilizing the expansive force of steam. Almost hand in hand with the development of the steam engine has gone the progress of electric discovery from Galvani and Volta to Faraday, calling into existence a number of astounding inventions and introducing us to a new chamber in the temple of knowledge of which we have doubtless barely crossed the threshold. I need not enlarge upon the telephone, the phonograph, the use of electricity for lighting and heating, but a word may be said concerning electricity as a source of motor power on a great scale. What would men have said a century ago to the idea of harnessing the stupendous gravitative force of Niagara Falls into the service of manufactories in the city of Buffalo, simply by turning it into electricity and distributing it on wires over miles of country? Yet at that time one of the greatest of American thinkers, Benjamin Thompson of Woburn, better known as Count Rumford, was leading the way

toward the establishment of the theory upon which that mighty achievement rests, the theory of the correlation of forces, or rather, perhaps, of the transformableness of modes of molecular motion, which is to-day the fundamental truth upon which the doctrine of evolution is based.

I spoke a moment ago of the great historic importance of the domestication of oxen and horses. The essential feature of the present day is that instead of borrowing motor energy from these noble and beneficent creatures, we manufacture it through deft manipulation of the forces of inorganic matter. Already the time is visibly approaching when the muscular strength of horses and oxen will be among the least of their uses to man. The number of horseless carriages that one meets on the street increases day by day; and electric cars, even in their present clumsy stage of development, are doing much to modify the face of things. One of the first effects of railways was to centralize industries and enable a greater number of people to live upon a given area; and hence one of the characteristic features of the century, by no means confined to America, has been the unprecedented increase in the size of cities. Now a visible effect of the short-distance electric tramway is to aid the diffusion of city populations over increasingly large suburban areas. The result will doubtless be to enhance alike the comfort of the town and the civilization of the country.

Yet another method of creating motor energy is through chemical processes, one of the earliest of which was the invention of gunpowder four centuries ago; but at the close of the eighteenth century a new era set



in and chemistry entered upon a career of achievement too vast for the imagination to compass. In my own mind familiarity has not yet begun to deaden the feeling of stupefied amazement when I reflect that scarcely a century has elapsed since Dr. Priestley informed mankind of the existence of oxygen. At the present day man has created in the laboratory more than one hundred thousand distinct substances which never existed before and never would have come into existence but for the human mind. We are now able to deal with one hundred thousand kinds of matter which were absent from the world of our great-grandfathers. These new material creations have their properties, like other kinds of matter. They react upon incident forces, each after its peculiar manner. They are useful in countless ways in the industrial arts, they furnish us with thousands of new medicines, and here and there they enable our spiritual vision to penetrate a little farther than formerly into the habits and behaviour of the myriad swinging and dancing atoms that taken together make the visible world.

I have said enough for my present purpose about that creation of motor energy, alike in regard to masses and in regard to molecules and atoms, which is the leading characteristic of the present age on its material side. We have now to consider what I called its chief characteristic on the intellectual or spiritual side, namely, the unification of nature. I said at the outset that this phrase is not altogether satisfactory, and perhaps we might substitute for it the doctrine of evolution. At all events, I wish to point out that the doctrine of evolution amounts to pretty much the same thing as the unification of nature. In order to illustrate



my meaning, let us consider a few familiar incidents in the history of scientific discovery.

Every achievement in science has consisted in pointing out likenesses that had before remained undetected. Every scientific inquirer is on the lookout for such likenesses. If the likeness assigned be a wrong one, we have false science. For example, in order to account for the movement of the starry heaven from east to west, some of the ancient astronomers fancied that the earth was encompassed by a revolving crystalline sphere in which countless points of light were set for the purpose of illuminating the earth during the sun's absence. Because the stars preserve the same relations of position, one to another, they were supposed to be fastened on the inside of this sphere, and in accordance with this theory we have such phrases as "fixed stars" and "firmament." Here men sought to explain the unknown by analogies with the known, but the likeness turned out to have been entirely mistaken. The merit of the Newtonian astronomy was that it found in the known world the correct likeness to that which was going on in the unknown world. Copernicus had shown that it is not the earth, but the sun, which forms the centre of the planetary system; Kepler had gone on to show that the planets revolve about the sun in ellipses and in accordance with certain laws of motion which he described; the question remained, Why do the planets move in this way? Does each one have a guardian angel to pull it or push it along, or must we perhaps give up the case without any explanation? Then Newton came and showed that what happens in the sky is just what happens on the earth. The earth pulls the moon exactly as it pulls the falling apple;

and the moon does not fall simply because its momentum keeps it as far away as it can get, exactly like a pebble whirled at the end of a string. It remained to show that the force of the pull varied directly with the mass of the bodies, and inversely, with the squares of their distances apart; and then it became necessary to know that the planetary motions thus produced would agree with what Kepler had shown them to be. The successful accomplishment of this task remains to-day the great typical instance of a perfect scientific discovery. It is further memorable as the first successful leap of the human mind from the earth on which man treads into the abysses of celestial space. Be it observed that what Newton did was to show that throughout the world of the solar system certain things go on exactly as they do in your own parlour and kitchen. Whether it be in the next street or out on the farthest planet, it is equally true that unsupported bodies fall and that things whirled try to get away.

I say, then, that Newton's discovery was a great step toward the unification of nature; it was the first decisive step in the demonstration that the universe is not one thing here and another thing there, but is animated by a principle of action that yields similar results wherever you go. Newton expressed his law of gravitation in terms that were universal, and there can be no doubt that he believed it to hold true of the stellar regions; yet it is only within the present century that the correctness of this latter opinion has been proved by direct observation. We may now safely affirm that the whole stellar universe conforms to the law of gravitation, but we can also go much farther than this. The wonderful discovery of spectrum analysis by Kirchhoff and Bunsen

in 1861 has shown that the whole stellar universe is made up of the same chemical materials as those with which we are familiar upon the earth. A part of the dazzling brilliance of the noonday sun is due to the vapour of iron floating in his atmosphere, and the faint luminosity of the remotest cloud-like nebula is the glow of just such hydrogen as enters into every drop of water that we drink. But this is not quite the whole story. The study of spectrum analysis has shown that the most deeply individual and characteristic attribute of any substance whatever is the number and arrangement of the lines and bands which it makes in the spectrum. You cannot say of iron that it is always black, for you have often seen it red, and occasionally, perhaps, white; nor can you say that it is always cold or hard; and if it has weight invariably, that is no more than can be said of other things besides iron. But whether black or white, hot or cold, smooth or rough, hard or soft, iron is that substance which when heated till it is luminous, always throws upon the spectrum the same elaborately complicated system of lines and bands, which are different from those that are thrown by any other substance. The revelations of the spectroscope therefore show that in all parts of the universe the interior constitution of matter is the same, and that its manifestations in the forms of light and heat are of the same character and conformable to the same physical laws. There is not one science of mechanics for the earth, or one kind of optics for Sirius, or one law of radiation for Jupiter, but from end to end of the visible universe the same laws hold sway and the fundamental principles of action are the same.

Not only is it true that the same physical laws hold

good throughout all space, but also throughout all time, as far as the farthest stretches of space and time that science can reveal to us. These are points of singular interest, inasmuch as our solar system is by no means stationary in the universe. It has long been known that our sun is flying through space with enormous velocity toward the region which we call the constellation Hercules, carrying with him his attendant planets with their moons. The revolving year, therefore, never brings us back to the place where it found us, but to a point many millions of miles distant. Is there not something rather thrilling in the thought that we are never staying in a familiar spot, but always plunging with a speed more than a thousand times as great as that of an express train through black and silent abysses never before revealed to us? Such being the case, it is interesting to be assured that no matter how long this continues, we may depend upon the beneficent uniformity of nature's processes. The mariners of four centuries ago, who urged their frail ships down the Senegambian coast toward the equator, were sometimes assailed with fears lest they should suddenly come into some boiling sea, where clouds of scalding steam would engulf them. But that unification of nature toward which modern science has led us quite removes the fear that, in the future wanderings of our earthly habitat, we are likely to encounter any other conditions than those that have prevailed throughout the past.

The unification of nature in point of time has been the work of the nineteenth century and especially of its geologists. When it was first proved that the age of the earth is not six thousand years, but many mill-

ions, there was a tendency to suppose that in earlier ages the agencies at work in modifying the earth's surface must have been far more violent than at present. It was quite natural that people should think so. The changes which geology revealed were apt to be mighty changes ; layers of strata many miles in area wrenched out of place and perhaps turned up on edge, erratic blocks of stone carried thousands of miles from home in glaciers more than a mile in thickness, long stretches of sea-coast torn away by the restless waves, mountains bearing on their summits the telltale evidences that they had once been submerged in the ocean ; all these things seemed to speak of gigantic displays of force like the wanton play of Titans and Asuras in the ancient mythologies. Still more was this view impressed upon the mind as the wonders of paleontology became gradually revealed to us. Here we were shown a succession of past ages, during which the aspect of things was totally different from what it is now. There was, for example, the age when the great coal measures were deposited, characterized by a dense and suffocating atmosphere, with vegetation generally as exuberant as that of modern Brazil, with colossal tree ferns abounding, but not a single deciduous tree or flowering herb in existence. That Carboniferous age had its day and vanished, leaving its vegetable wealth locked up in the bowels of the earth to heat the houses and propel the engines of men in this age of ours. By and by there was a Jurassic age, when reptiles were the lords of creation, the bulkiest animals ever seen upon earth, yet with brains too small to do more than guide their clumsy movements. Those were the days when the Atlanto-



sauros, with body one hundred feet long and tail as stout as a ship's mast, dragged his unwieldy length over the plains of Montana, while in every latitude and clime you would come upon similar cold-blooded dinosaurs, sometimes bigger than elephants, sometimes as small as mice, stalking through the landscape or burrowing underground, sitting upright, kangaroo fashion, with heads near the tree-tops, flying about in the gloaming with bat-like wings like a schooner's mainsail, or sailing in the seas with long crane-like necks reared aloft above the water. Those were long days, but they too passed, and the years are millions since the last dinosaur perished. And then, to mention just one more, we are introduced to an Eocene world, about which the most striking things are the appearance of deciduous trees alongside of the evergreens, the vast and varied development of beautiful forms and colours simultaneously in the insect world and in the world of flowers, and lastly, the presence of sundry queer-looking, warm-blooded mammals calculated to produce in an observer the state of mind of old Polonius, for one would seem like a pig were it not also something like a small donkey, another would seem about midway between cat, rabbit, and monkey, all of them being generalized types which have since been variously specialized. I need not add that these creatures, too, are all gone.

Now in view of such repeated and wholesale destruction of life, it was not strange that the geologists of a hundred years ago should have imagined a succession of dire catastrophes involving a large part or the whole of the earth's surface. It was supposed that the beginning and end of every great geologic period



such as the Carboniferous or the Jurassic or the Eocene, here selected for mention, were characterized by such catastrophes, which swept from the face of the earth all existing forms of life. It was supposed that the introduction of a new geologic period was marked by a fresh introduction of living beings through some inexplicable act of wholesale creation. There were plenty of facts, indeed, which did not harmonize with this view, such, for example, as the continuous existence of a certain kind of shell-fish known as trilobites through many successive geologic periods. The theory of catastrophes appeared to demand the assumption that these trilobites were wiped out and created over again half a dozen times; which was rather a shock to men's acquired notions of probability.

The complete overthrow of this doctrine of catastrophes was effected by Sir Charles Lyell, whose great book was published in 1830. The difficulty with the catastrophizers was that while talking glibly about millions of years, they had not stopped to consider what is meant by a million years when it takes the shape of work accomplished. Suppose you were to go to the Grand Cañon of the Colorado River, and stand upon the fearful brink of the gorge, where it is more than a mile in depth, looking down at the stream like a tiny bright ribbon at the bottom, and were told that this stream is wearing off from its rocky bed about one-tenth of an inch every year, how your mind would feel staggered in the attempt to estimate the length of time it must have taken to excavate the whole of that mighty gorge! Your first impulse would certainly be to speak of quadrillions of years, or something of the sort; yet a simple calculation shows that one million

of years would much more than suffice for the whole process. Now all over the globe the myriad raindrops, rushing in rivers to the sea, are with tireless industry working to obliterate existing continents, and the mean rate at which they are accomplishing this work of denudation seems to be about one foot in three thousand years. At this rate, and from the action of rivers alone, it would take just about two million years to wear the whole existing continent of Europe, with all its huge mountain masses, down to the sea level.

It was the application of such considerations by Sir Charles Lyell to the great problems of geology, taken up one after another, that revolutionized the whole study of the earth's surface. It soon became clear that the great catastrophes were entirely unnecessary to account for the effects which we see; and for the first time in the history of human thought we had brought before us, on the most colossal scale, the truth that there is nothing in the universe which accomplishes so much as the incessant cumulative action of tiny causes. This great thought has a significance that is manifold and far-reaching; it penetrates the moral world as well as the intellectual, and when thoroughly grasped, it affects the conduct of our lives as powerfully as the direction of our thoughts. It affords a suggestive commentary upon that sublime scene in the Old Testament which suggested to Mendelssohn the greatest of his works, the scene in which Jehovah reveals Himself, not in the fire nor the earthquake nor the tempest, but in the still, small voice.

This theory of Lyell's was at first known as Uniformitarianism as contrasted with Catastrophism. It has everywhere won the field, but with sundry qualifi-

cations and explanations. It is not believed that the earth's surface was always so quiet as at present, because it is an accepted opinion among men of science that the earth was once a vaporous body immensely hotter than at present and to some extent self-luminous, as Jupiter and Saturn are to-day. Such a state of things was a state of more or less curious commotion such as may now be witnessed upon the surfaces of those planets which are so big that they still remain hot. Obviously, the cooling of the earth's surface, with the formation of a crust, must have entailed increasing quiet, and it was of course not until long after the formation of a solid crust with liquid oceans that organic life could have begun to exist. Even after the introduction of plants and animals, the energies of the heated interior, imperfectly repressed, broke forth from time to time in local catastrophes upon the surface, though doubtless never in one that could be called universal.

In early geologic ages there were doubtless earthquakes and floods more violent than any recorded in history, but the chief agencies of change were the quiet ones, and in general, if at any time you had visited the earth, you would have found a peaceful scene where gentle showers and quickening sunshine coaxed forth the sprouting herbage, with worms crawling in the ground and quadrupeds of some sort browsing on the vegetation, and never would there just come a time when you could say that the old age had gone and a new one succeeded it. How does one generation of men succeed another? The fathers are not swept away in a body to make room for the children, but one by one the old drop off and the young come on till a

day is reached when none of those remain that once were here. How does some form of human speech become extinct? About a hundred years ago an old lady named Dolly Dentreath died in Cornwall. She could speak the Cornish language; after her death there was nobody that could. Thus quietly did the living Cornish language become a dead language; and in a like unobtrusive manner have been wrought most of the new becomings which have changed and are changing the earth.

The net result of all this study was that the same kind of forces were at work a hundred million years ago that are at work to-day, and that the lessons gained from our familiar experiences may safely be applied to the explanation of phenomena the most remote in time as well as in space. In a still more striking degree was this exemplified in the researches of Darwin. When it became clear that there had been no universal catastrophes, it was also clear that the persistence of trilobites and other creatures unchanged through successive periods simply showed that they had existed all the time because the conditions happened to be favourable. But then it was further noticed that where in some given territory one geologic period follows another, the creatures of the latter period resemble those of the earlier much more closely than the creatures of some distant region. Thus, through many successive periods South America has abounded in animals of the general types of armadillo, sloth, and ant-eater. For example, although the change from the megatherium of the Pliocene age to the modern sloth is greater than the change from a Bengal tiger to kitty that purrs on the hearth, yet after all the megatherium

is of the sloth type. But if megatherium was once annihilated by some grand convulsion, after which a fresh creation of mammals occurred in South America, why should a sloth occur among the new creations rather than a kangaroo or an elephant? For a while the advocates of special creations had their answer ready. They said that every animal is best suited to the conditions in which he lives, that he was created in order to fit those conditions; therefore God has repeatedly created anew the sloth type of animal in South America because it has all along been best fitted to the conditions to which animal life is subjected there. But this ingenious argument was soon overthrown. It is true that every animal is more or less adapted to the environment in which he lives, for otherwise he would at once become extinct; but in order to determine whether he is best adapted to that environment, it remains to be seen whether he can maintain himself in it against all comers. Now in a great many instances he is far from able to do this. New Zealand grass is fast disappearing before grass introduced from Europe, and the marsupials of Australia are being surely and steadily extirpated by the introduction of species with widely different structure but similar habits. Thus the marsupial rodent is vanishing before the European rat even faster than the native black fellow is vanishing in presence of Englishmen.

Now if the Creator followed the rule of putting wild species only in the habitats best suited to them, He would have put the European rat in Australia, and not the marsupial rodent. This illustration shows how far the old style of explanation failed to suit the facts.



It is now understood that one of the principal factors in establishing a high degree of vitality has been competition for the means of supporting life. In the great continental mass of Europe, Asia, and Africa the forms of life have been most numerous and the competition has been keenest; hence life, both animal and vegetable, has been more strongly developed than elsewhere; creatures have been produced that are tougher and more resourceful than in other places; they have the peculiar combinations of qualities that enable their possessors to live more highly developed. Second in this respect comes North America; then, very far below it, because more isolated, comes South America; lowest of all, because most isolated, comes Australasia.

Australian man is the lowest of the human species, not having risen to the bow-and-arrow stage; the Maori of New Zealand, a high type of barbarian, is not indigenous, but a comparatively late arrival; in its natural history generally Australasia has only reached a point attained in the northern hemisphere two or three geological periods ago. In the chalk period marsupials abounded in Europe, but they were long ago extinguished by placental mammals of greater vitality, and the same thing is now happening in Australasia. The true reason for the resemblance between any fauna and its predecessors in the same area is that the later forms are the slightly modified descendants of the earlier forms. Thus there arose the suspicion that the millions of separate acts of creation once thought necessary to account for the specific forms of plants and animals were as unnecessary and improbable as the series of convulsions formerly imagined as the causes of geological change. What could those



acts of creation have been? Let us try to imagine one. We need not dread too close an approach to detail. This is a world of detail; details, in short, are what it consists of. Try, then, to imagine the special creation of a lobster. Was there ever a particular moment when the protein-molecules spontaneously rushed together from all points of the compass and aggregated themselves into a complicated system of tissues, fleshy, fatty, vitreous, and calcareous, and furthermore took on the forms of divers organs, digestive, sensitive, and locomotive, until that marvellous creature, the lobster, might have been seen in his perfection where a moment before there was absolute vacancy? One may not say that such a thing is impossible, but it surely does not commend itself to the modern mind as altogether probable. Yet in what other way we are to think of special creation is not easy to point out, unless we are prepared to assent to the negro preacher who graphically described the Creator as moulding Adam out of damp clay and setting him up against the fence to dry. The advocates of special creations naturally shrank from attempts to clothe their hypothesis with details, and deemed it safer, as well as more reverent, to relegate it into the regions of the unknown.

Now what Darwin did was the same sort of thing that Newton and Lyell had done. He asked himself if there was not some simple and familiar cause now operating to modify plants and animals which could be shown to have been in operation through past ages; and furthermore, if such a cause could not be proved adequate to bring about truly specific changes. We are familiar with the production of new breeds of

horses and cattle, pigeons and fowl, and countless fruits and flowers, through human agency. How is this done? Simply through selection. I need not follow the steps by which Darwin reached his conclusions. Selection by man could not account for the origin of species, but the leap of inference which Darwin took from human selection to natural selection, the masterly way in which he proved that the survival of favoured individuals in the struggle for existence must operate as a process of selection, incessant, ubiquitous and unavoidable, so that all living things are from birth to death under its sway; this was of course one of the most memorable achievements of the human mind. It was in the highest sense poetic work, introducing mankind to a new world of thought. But let us not fail to observe that its scientific character lay in its appealing to familiar agencies to assist in interpreting the unknown. Just how far Darwin's theory of natural selection covered the whole ground of the phenomena to be explained is still a question. I believe the ultimate verdict will be that it was far from covering the whole ground; but it covered so much ground, it was substantiated and verified in such a host of cases, as to win general assent to the doctrine of evolution which had before 1860 been accepted only by a comparatively few leading minds.

In this connection let me for the thousandth time point out the fallacy of the common notion that we owe to Charles Darwin the doctrine of evolution. Nothing of the sort. On the other hand, there were large portions of the general theory of evolution which Darwin did not even understand. His theory of descent by modifications through the agency of

natural selection was an immensely important contribution to the doctrine of evolution, but it should no more be confounded with that doctrine than Lyell's geology or the Newtonian astronomy should be confounded with it.

If Herbert Spencer had not lived in the nineteenth century, although the age would have been full of illustrations of evolution, contributed by Darwin and others, yet in all probability such a thing as the doctrine of evolution would not have been heard of. What, then, is the central pith of the doctrine of evolution? It is simply this: That the changes that are going on throughout the universe, so far as our scientific methods enable us to discern and follow them, are not chaotic or unrelated, but follow an intelligible course from one state of things toward another: and more particularly, that the course which they follow is like that which goes on during the development of an ovum into a mature animal. This, I say, is the central pith of the doctrine of evolution. It started in the study of embryology, a department in which Darwin had but little first-hand knowledge. Spencer's forerunner was the great Esthonian naturalist, Carl Ernest von Baer, who published in 1829 a wonderful book generalizing the results of observation up to that time on the embryology of a great many kinds of animals. Curiously enough, von Baer called this book a "History of Evolution," although neither then, nor at any time down to his death, was he an evolutionist in our sense of the word. So far from it was he that in his later years he persistently refused to accept Darwin's theory of natural selection.

Now in studying the development of an individual

ovum as exemplified in a thousand different species of animals, von Baer arrived at a group of technical formulas so general that they cover and describe with accuracy the series of changes that occur in all these cases. In other words, he made a general statement of the law of development for all physiological species. Now Spencer's great achievement was to prove that von Baer's law of development, with sundry modifications, applies to the succession of phenomena in the whole universe so far as known to us.

Spencer took the development of the solar system according to the theories of Kant and Laplace, he took the geologic development of the earth according to the school of Lyell, he took the development of plant and animal life upon the earth's surface according to Linnaeus and Cuvier, supplemented and rectified by Hooker and Huxley, and he showed that all these multifarious and apparently unrelated phenomena have through countless ages been proceeding according to the very law which expresses the development of an individual embryo. In addition to this, Spencer furnished an especially elaborate illustration of his theory in a treatise upon psychology in which he traced the evolution of mind from the first appearance of rudimentary nerve systems in creatures as low as starfishes up to the most abstruse and complex operations of human intelligence, and he showed that throughout this vast region the phenomena conformed to his law. This was by far the profoundest special research that has ever been made on the subject of evolution, and it was published four years before Spencer had ever heard of Darwin's theory of natural selection.

In those days Spencer's attitude toward such ques-

tions was much more Lamarckian than Darwinian; that is to say, he attributed far greater importance to such agencies as the cumulative effects of use and disuse than Darwin ever did; but when Darwin's great work appeared, Spencer cordially welcomed him as a most powerful auxiliary. Spencer's next achievement was to point out some of the most essential features in the development of mankind as socially organized, and to make it practically certain that with the further advance of knowledge this group of phenomena also will be embraced under the one great law of evolution. And there was still one thing more which Spencer may fairly be said to have accomplished. The generalization of the metamorphosis of forces which was begun a century ago by Count Rumford when he recognized heat as a mode of molecular motion was consummated about the middle of the century, when Dr. Joule showed mathematically just how much heat is equivalent to just how much visible motion, and when the researches of Helmholtz, Mayer, and Faraday completed the grand demonstration that light and heat and magnetism and electricity and visible motion are all interchangeable one into the other, and are continually thus interchanging from moment to moment.

Now Spencer showed that the universal process of evolution as described in his formula not only conforms to the development of an individual life as generalized by von Baer, but is itself an inevitable consequence of the perpetual metamorphosis of energy that was detected by the great thinkers above named, from Rumford to Helmholtz. Had he only accomplished the former part of the task, his place in



the nineteenth century would have been that of a greater Kepler; as it is, his place is undoubtedly that of a greater Newton. The achievement is so stupendous that that of Darwin is fairly dwarfed in comparison. Now in Spencer's law of evolution the unification of nature is carried to something like completeness. It shows us that the truth which began to be discerned when Newton's mind took the first great leap into the celestial spaces is a universal truth. It is not to be supposed that as yet we have more than crossed the threshold of the temple of science. We have hitherto simply been finding out the way to get the first peep into its mysteries; yet in that first peep we get a steady gleam which assures us that all things in the universe are parts of a single dramatic scheme, and that the agencies concerned everywhere, far and near, are interpretable in the same way that we interpret the most familiar facts of daily life. Just how far the realization of this truth has affected the thought and life of our age in its details would be difficult to tell. It would be entirely incorrect to say that the unification of nature in the minds of thinkers of the present day is a consequence of Spencer's generalizations. The correct way of stating the case would be to say that Spencer's generalizations give us the complete and scientific statement of a truth which in more or less vague and imperfect shape permeates the intellectual atmosphere of our time.

It is not from the labours of any one thinker or from researches in any one branch of science that we get the conception of a unified nature, but it is a result of the resistless momentum of scientific inquiry during the past two centuries. Such changes in the intellectual



atmosphere often work great and unsuspected results. Take, for example, the disappearance of the belief in witchcraft. From prehistoric times down to the last quarter of the seventeenth century the entire human race took witchcraft for granted; to-day it has completely disappeared from the thoughts of educated people in civilized countries. What has caused the change? Probably no human belief has so much recorded testimony in its favour, if we consider quantity merely, as the belief in witchcraft; and certainly nobody has ever refuted all that testimony. Yet the human mind which once welcomed certain kinds of evidence has now become incurably inhospitable to them. When at Ipswich, in England, in 1664, an old woman named Rose Cullender muttered threats against a passing teamster and half an hour later his cart got stuck in passing through a gate, one of the most learned judges in England considered this sufficient proof that Rose had bewitched the gate, and she was accordingly hanged. To this kind of reasoning the whole community assented, except half a dozen eccentric sceptics. To-day you laugh at such so-called evidence, and your laugh shows that your mind has become utterly inhospitable to it. What has caused the change? Might it be Newton's law of gravitation? Directly, perhaps, no; yet in a certain sense, yes. The habit of appealing to known and familiar agencies instead of remote and fancied ones in order to explain phenomena is a habit which has been growing upon the civilized mind very rapidly since the seventeenth century, and every triumph, great and small, which that habit has achieved has helped to strengthen it in many more ways than we can detect and point out. The

swift and astonishing development of science since Newton's time, the repeated discovery of new truths, the frequent invention of new industrial devices, the often renewed triumph of mind over matter, due simply to that wholesome habit, has diffused it in more or less strength throughout all civilized communities. In short, we bring to the whole business of life minds predisposed very differently from what they were two centuries ago, and one of the results is the disappearance of witchcraft from our thoughts. It has not been crushed by a battery of arguments; it has simply been dropped out in cold neglect, as a dead political issue is dropped out of our campaign platforms without a passing word of respect.

Now with regard to some of the scientific truths, methods, and habits which I have alluded to as characteristic of the theory of evolution and its pioneers, it is obvious that they have begun to permeate the thought of our time in many directions. Take, for example, the writing of history. There was a time when historians dealt mainly in personal details, in the intrigues of courts and in battles and sieges; when the study of some conspicuous personality like Luther or Napoleon was supposed to suffice for the understanding of the historic movements of his time; when it could be said of sundry decisive battles that a contrary event would have essentially altered the direction of human development through all subsequent ages; when some writers even went so far as to declare that the biographies of all great men lumped together would be equivalent to a history of mankind. Throughout this whole school of writing you may detect that fondness for the unusual and catastrophic that used to

characterize the scientific mind when untrained in modern methods and results.

Now the past generation has seen the method of treating history quite revolutionized. In the study of political institutions and economic conditions we are endeavouring to understand the cumulative action of minute but incessant causes such as we see in operation around us. We endeavour to carry to the interpretation of past ages the experience derived from our own; and knowing that nothing is more treacherous than hasty generalizations from analogy, we devote to the institutions and conditions of past ages and our own a study of most exacting and microscopic minuteness, in order that we may guard against error in our conclusions.

The result is a very considerable revolution in our opinions of the past and our feelings toward it, while an enormous mass of facts that our grandfathers would have called insufferably tedious have become invested for us with absorbing interest. Or, to cite something more immediately practical, if you consider the projects which men have in various ages entertained for reforming society, you will find that along with inexperience goes a naïve faith that some sovereign decree or some act of parliament or some cunningly devised constitution or some happily planned referendum will at once accomplish the desired result. But cold, hard experience soon shows that sovereign edicts may be neglected, that it is far easier to make statutes than to enforce them, and that in such a delicate and complex structure as that of society the operation of laws and constitutions is liable to differ very widely from what was anticipated. The

great difficulty of securing wise legislation is illustrated by the fact that in almost all statute books, nine-tenths of the legislation comes under the class which might be introduced as an act to repeal an act. Continually we find men asserting in one breath that human nature is always the same, and in the next moment assuming that it may be extensively remodelled by some happy feat of legislation. Now the mental habits that come from a study of evolution lead us to very different views upon such matters. We can produce abundant evidence to show that human nature is not always the same, while we also recognize that it cannot be suddenly or violently modified by any governmental might or cunning. We recognize that one must not expect to take a mass of poor units and organize them into an excellent sum total. We do not imagine that a community of Hottentots would be particularly benefited by our federal constitution any more than they would feel comfortable in our clothes. Our experience makes us feel that human nature admits of very considerable improvement, but that this can be effected only through the slow and cumulative effect of countless reactions of individual experience upon individual character, and that therefore while the millennium is sure to come sooner or later, it can neither be bullied nor coaxed into coming prematurely. It seems to me that this mental attitude toward social reforms has been notably strengthened and diffused within recent years.

A word must be said in conclusion about the effects of recent science upon man's view of his relation to the universe. To untrained minds in all ages the substitution of a familiar and calculable agency for one remote and incalculable has had an atheistic look, and

consequently it has had a tendency either to frighten honest inquirers or to induce their neighbours to burn them, and this state of things has undoubtedly been a drawback on the progress of mankind. It was said of Pythagoras that when he discovered his famous proposition about triangles which sixty generations of school-boys have known as the Forty-seventh in the first book of Euclid, he celebrated his discovery by sacrificing a hundred oxen to Apollo. "From that time to this," exclaims Ludwig Buchner, with a bitter sneer on his lips, "from that time to this, whenever a new truth in science is discovered, all oxen bellow with fright!" For all its brutality, there is clear pith and humour in this remark; but it does not express the proper frame of mind in which to contemplate the narrowness of the men of bygone days.

We ought so far to sympathize with them as to see that at the first glance it must have seemed very degrading to be told that man's terrestrial habitat was an attendant upon the sun and not the sun upon the earth; nor can we wonder that when Newton appealed to apple and sling, it should have occurred to many people that he was dethroning God and putting gravitation in His place. That sort of thing went on until scientific students of nature in many cases acknowledged the imputation. Being good physicists, but weak philosophers, they acknowledged the charge and retorted: "What then? No matter what becomes of religion, we must abide by the evidence before us; we must follow Truth, though she lead us to Hades." Such was the atheistic state of mind illustrated by the French materialists of the eighteenth century, and they have had a considerable following



throughout most of the nineteenth in nearly all civilized countries. One result of this state of mind was Comte's Philosophy of Positivism, which aimed at organizing scientific truths without reference to any ulterior implications, which was like the ostrich burying its head in the sand and asseverating, "There is no world save that which I see." Another form which it took was agnosticism, or the simple, weary refusal to deal with subjects inaccessible to the ordinary methods of scientific proof. Out of this mental attitude came a disposition which reached its height toward the middle of the century, to deal with sciences merely as groups of disconnected facts which men might gather and tabulate very much as boys and girls collect postage stamps. The acme of glory in science would be thus attained when you had described some weed or insect hitherto unknown or undistinguished, and were entitled to apply to it some Greek name at which Aristotle would have shuddered, with your own family name attached, in the Latin genitive case. It was this feeling which led the French Academy of Sciences some thirty years ago to elect for a new member some Scandinavian naturalist, whose name I forget, instead of Charles Darwin, inasmuch as the former had described three or four new bugs while the latter was only a constructor of theories. In the same mood I remember a discussion in a certain learned historical society as to whether the late John Richard Green could properly be called a historian, inasmuch as he had apparently neither discovered nor edited any new documents, but had only described the life of a great people.

Now one result of the unification of nature of which



I have been speaking is that this scrappy, dry-as-dust method of studying things is falling into comparative disfavour. It was a very prompt and striking result of the publication of Darwin's "Origin of Species" that it supplied a new stimulus to all the naturalists in the world. Immediately their studies of plants and animals were brought to bear upon the question, whether the facts known to them tended to prove or disprove Darwin's views; and they suddenly found that nature had become far more interesting than when studied in the spirit of the stamp collector.

But still more, the vast sweep of Spencer's inquiries has brought it home to us at every turn that the ostrich method of hiding our heads and pretending that we see all that there is to be seen is no longer tenable. Many a time I have heard Spencer conclude some discussion by saying, "Thus you see it is ever so; there is no physical problem whatever which does not soon land us in a metaphysical problem that we can neither solve nor elude." In this last word we have the justification for those younger thinkers who are not contented to stop just where Spencer felt obliged to. As the startling disclosures of the past century become assimilated in our mental structure, we see that man is now justified in feeling himself as never before a part of nature, that the universe is no inhospitable wandering-place, but his own home; that the mighty sweep of its events from age to age are but the working out of a cosmic drama in which his part is the leading one; and that all is an endless manifestation of one all-pervading creative Power, Protean in its myriad phases, yet essentially similar to the conscious soul within us. To these views Darwinism powerfully contributed

when it showed the ultimate welfare of a species to be the chief determining factor in selecting such modifications as would insure its survival. Darwinism certainly displaced many time-honoured theological interpretations, but at this point it brought back ten times as much theology as it ever displaced. So, too, that line of researches first set forth in my "Cosmic Philosophy," which exhibit man as the terminal figure in the long series of development, and insist upon the increasing subordination of material life to spiritual life, have the same implication. It seems to me that the most important effect which the doctrine of evolution is having is that of deepening and enlarging man's conceptions of religious truth. Forty years ago it would have seemed incredible that sectarian bitterness should have so greatly diminished and Christian charity so hopefully increased as we now see to have been the case, and I believe this is largely because in those days when science was pursued in the mood of the stamp collector, the religious world also was setting too much value upon things non-essential, attaching too much importance to the husks and integuments of religious truth rather than to its eternal spiritual essence. The change that we have seen has been in the direction of a life far higher and broader, far sweeter, more wholesome, and more hopeful than of old. And for this we have largely to thank those methods of study that are teaching us for the first time how to look upon nature as an organic whole.

X

KOSHCHEI THE DEATHLESS



## X

### KOSHCHEI THE DEATHLESS

AMONG the folk-tales which amuse our children and afford matter of speculation for philosophers, few are more widely known than the story of "The Town Musicians of Bremen," which is Number 27 of the Grimm collection, the story that tells how a party of robbers, who had cosily ensconced themselves in a house in the forest, were driven forth in a panic by the music of a quartet of beasts that brayed, barked, caterwauled, and crowed in weird and grewsome concert. The story is perhaps most generally known from the Grimm version, but it is found in one shape or another in all the Teutonic and Keltic parts of Europe. It appears as indigenous in Ireland, under the title of "Jack and his Comrades," where some features are added which bring it within the large class of stories relating to grateful beasts. Jack is the young hero who figures so conspicuously in nursery literature, who starts out to seek his fortune. He drags the ass out of a bog in which he is floundering, and afterward rescues the dog from some naughty boys who are tormenting him. The accession of the cat to the company is marked by no special adventure, but the cock is saved by the dog's prowess from the clutches of a red fox which is carrying it off. When they all reach the house in the wood, it is Jack who creeps up

to the window and discovers six robbers drinking whiskey punch. He listens to their talk, and overhears how they lately bagged a fine booty at Lord Dunlavin's, with the connivance of the gatekeeper. The house is then taken by storm, as in the German version, and when the bravest robber returns in the dark he meets with a similar ill-reception. The stolen treasure is all found secreted in the house, and next morning Jack loads it on to the donkey, and they proceed to Lord Dunlavin's castle. The treasure is restored, the gatekeeper is hanged, the faithful beasts get well provided for in the kitchen and farm-yard, and Jack marries the lord's only daughter, and eventually succeeds to the earldom.

Taken as a whole, this fantastic story may not have any consistent mythological significance, but it has certainly been pieced together out of genuine mythical conceptions. It is impossible to read it without being reminded of the lame ass in the Zend *Yaçna*, who by his fearful braying terrifies the night monsters and keeps them away from the sacred *homa*, or drink of the gods. In the Veda this business of guarding the *soma* is intrusted not to an ass, but to a centaur or *gandharva*. The meaning of these creatures is well enough understood. The Vedic *gandharvas*, corresponding to the Greek *κενταυροι*, were cloud deities, who, among other accomplishments, were skilful performers on the kettledrum; and their musical performances, as well as the braying of the ass in the Zendavesta, appear to have represented neither more nor less than the thunder with which Indra terrified the Panis, or night robbers. The ass, indeed, plays a considerable part in Hindu mythology; and the pro-



tection of treasure and intimidation of thieves is one of his regular mythical functions.<sup>1</sup> Now when we consider the close resemblance between this function of the ass in Hindu mythology and the part which he plays in the Kelto-Teutonic legend, does it not seem altogether probable that this prominent idea in the grotesque and homely story—the idea of robbers frightened by a donkey's voice—had its origin in an Old Aryan mythical conception? If this be the case,—even without considering the other members of the quartet, albeit they have all figured very conspicuously in divers Aryan myths,—we are bound to account for the wide diffusion of the story by supposing that it is a very old tradition, and has not been passed about in recent times from one Aryan people to another.

If our view were restricted to this story alone, however, perhaps we could not make out a very strong case for it as illustrating an early community of Aryan tradition. It is no doubt possible, for example, that the story may have been originally pieced together out of mythical materials by some Teutonic story-teller, and may have been transmitted into Britain by Uncle Toby's armies in Flanders, or in any other of a thousand ways; for the social intercourse between Kelts and Teutons has always been very close. Indeed, I am inclined to think that with this particular story such was the case. In both versions the members of the quartet are the very same animals, and the sequence of events is so closely parallel as to raise a very strong presumption that one was directly based upon the other.

<sup>1</sup> See Gubernatis, "Zoölogical Mythology," I. 370-379.

Some scholars think that we may account in this way for the greater part of the resemblances among folk-tales in different parts of Europe, and in support of their opinion they allege the immense popularity, in the Middle Ages, of the versions of the Pantcha Tantra and the Seven Wise Masters. But such an opinion seems based on altogether too narrow a view of the subject. In the first place, the stories which have come into Europe through the Seven Wise Masters and the versions of the Pantcha Tantra are but a drop in the bucket, when compared with the vast mythical lore which has been taken down from the lips of the common people within the last fifty years. For the greater part of this mythical lore no imaginable literary source can be pointed out. In the second place, however practicable this theory of what we may call "lateral transmission" might seem if applied only to one legend, like the story of the donkey and his friends, above cited, it breaks down utterly when we try to apply it to the entire folk-lore of any one people. Granting that the Scotch and Irish Kelts may have learned this particular story from some German source, we have yet to remember that four-fifths of Scoto-Irish folk-lore is essentially similar to the folk-lore of Germany; and shall we say that Scotch and Irish nurses never told nursery tales until they were instructed, in some way or other, from a German source? We seem here to get very near to a *reductio ad absurdum*; but the case is made immeasurably worse when we reflect that it is not with two or three but with twenty or thirty different Aryan peoples, and throughout more than a hundred distinct areas, that this remarkable community of popular tradition occurs. Is it in any

way credible that one of these groups of people should have been obliged to go to some other group to get its nursery tales? Or, to put the question more forcibly, is it at all credible that any one group should have been so differently constituted from the rest, in regard to the making of folk-lore, that it should have enjoyed a monopoly of this kind of invention? Yet, unless we feel prepared to defend some such extreme position as this, there appears to be nothing for us to do but to admit that all the Aryan people have gone on from the outset with their own native folk-lore.

Here and there, no doubt, they have acquired new stories from one another, and the instances of such cross-transmission have probably been very numerous; but with regard to the great body of their fireside traditions we may safely assert, on general principles of common sense, that it has been indigenous. When we find that not two or three but two or three thousand nursery-tales are common to Ireland and Russia, to Norway and Hindustan, we may feel pretty sure that the gist of these tales, their substratum of genuine myth, was all contained in Old Aryan folk-lore in the times when there was but one Old Aryan language and culture.

In support of this view we have not only this general probability, sustained by the difficulty of adopting any alternative: we have also the demonstrated fact that the whole structure of Aryan speech, with the culture that it implies, however multiform it is to-day, has been traced back to an era of uniformity. Quite independently of our study of myths and legends, we know that there was once a time when a part of the common ancestors of the Englishman, the Russian,

and the Hindu formed but one single people; and we know that English words are like Russian and Hindustani words because they have been handed down by tradition from a common speech, and for no other reason, occult or plausible. Knowing this to be so, is it not obvious that the conditions of the case quite cover also the case of nursery tales? Children learn the adventures of Little Bo-Peep and Jack the Giant-Killer precisely as they learn the words of their mother tongue; and if the power of tradition is sufficient to make us say "three" in America to-day just because our ancestors said "tri" forty centuries ago in some such country as Lithuania, why should not the same conservative habit insure a similar duration to the rhymes and stories with which infancy is soothed and delighted?

Our position is further strengthened when we duly consider the significant fact that, great as is the number of entirely similar *stories* which can be brought together from the remotest corners of the Indo-European world, the number of similar mythical *incidents* is far greater. The wide diffusion of such stories as "Cinderella" and "Faithful John" is in itself a striking phenomenon. But after all, the main point is that no matter how endlessly diversified the great mass of Aryan nursery tales may appear on a superficial view, they are nevertheless all made up of a few fundamental incidents, which recur again and again in a bewildering variety of combinations. Thus the conception of grateful beasts, already noticed, appears in hundreds of stories, its simplest version being the familiar legend of Andronicus, who pulls a thorn from a lion's paw, and is long afterward spared by the same lion in the

amphitheatre. Hardly less common is the notion of a man whose life depends on the duration or integrity of something external to him, as the existence of Meleagros was to be determined by the burning of a log. The idea of a Delilah-like woman, who by amorous wheedling extorts the secret of her lover's invulnerability, is equally widespread. And the conception of human beings turned into stone by an enchanter's spell is continually repeated, from the classic victims of the Gorgon to the brothers of Parizade in the *Arabian Nights*.

These elements are neatly blended in the South Indian legend of the magician Punchkin, who turned into stone six daughters of a rajah, with their husbands, and incarcerated the youngest daughter in a tower until she should make up her mind to marry him. He forgot, however, to enchant the baby son of this youngest daughter, who years afterward, when grown to manhood, discovered his mother in the tower, and laid a plot for Punchkin's destruction. The princess gives Punchkin to understand that she will probably marry him if he will tell her the secret of his immortality. After two or three futile attempts to hoodwink his treacherous charmer, he confesses that his life is bound up with that of a little green parrot concealed under six jars of water in the midst of a jungle a hundred thousand miles distant. On his journey thither, the young prince rescues some eaglets from a serpent, and they reward him by carrying him on their crossed wings out of the reach of the dragons who guard the jungle. As he seizes the parrot, Punchkin roars for mercy, and immediately sets at liberty all the victims of the enchantment; but as soon as this



has been done the prince wrings the parrot's neck, and the magician dies.

From the Deccan to Argyleshire this story is told, with hardly any variation, the most familiar version of it being the Norse tale of "The Giant who had no Heart in his Body." But we are now looking at these stories analytically, and what we have chiefly to notice are the ubiquity, the persistence, and the manifold recombinations of the mythical incidents. These points are well illustrated in the Russian legend of "Marya Morevna," that is, "Mary, Daughter of the Sea." This beautiful princess marries Prince Ivan, — the everlasting Jack or Odysseus of popular tradition, whom the wise dawn goddess ever favours, and insures him ultimate success. Marya Morevna is an Amazon, like Artemis and Brynhild, and after the honeymoon is over the impulse to go out and fight becomes irresistible. Ivan is left in charge of the house, and may do whatever he likes except to look into "that closet there." This incident you have met with in the stories of "Bluebeard" and the "Third Royal Mendicant" in the Arabian Nights, and there is hardly any limit to its recurrence. Of course, the moment his wife is out of the house, Ivan goes straight to the closet, and there he finds Koshchei the Deathless, fettered by twelve strong chains. Koshchei pleads piteously for some water, as he has not tasted a drop for ten years; but after the charitable Ivan has given him three bucketfuls, the malignant giant breaks his chains like cobwebs, and flies out of the window in a whirlwind, and overtakes Marya Morevna, and carries her home a prisoner. To recount all the adventures of Ivan while seeking his wife would be to encumber ourselves too



heavily with mythical incident. He finds her several times, and carries her off; but Koshchei the Deathless has a magic horse, belonging to the same breed with Pegasus, the horses of Achilles, the enchanted steed of the Arabian Nights, and the valiant hippogriff of Ariosto, and with this wonderful horse Koshchei always overtakes and baffles the fugitives. Prince Ivan's game is hopeless unless he can find out where Koshchei obtained his incomparable steed. By dint of industrious coaxing Marya Morevna learns that there is a Baba Yaga, or witch, who lives beyond a river of fire, and keeps plenty of mares; one time Koshchei tended the mares for three days without losing any, and the witch gave him a foal for his services. The way to get across the fiery river was to wave a certain magic handkerchief, when a lofty but narrow bridge would instantly span the stream. Here we have Es-Sirat, the rainbow bridge of the Moslem, over which the good pass safely to heaven, while the wicked fall into the flames of hell below. Marya Morevna obtained the handkerchief, and so Ivan contrived to get across the river. Now comes the grateful-beast incident. The prince is faint with hunger, and is successively tempted by a chicken, a bit of honeycomb, and a lion's cub; but on the intercession of the old hen, the queen bee, and the lioness, he refrains from meddling with their treasures, and arrives half starved at the horrible hut of the Baba Yaga, enclosed within a circle of twelve poles, on eleven of which are stuck human heads. The old hag gives him the mares to look after, with the friendly warning that if he loses a single one he needn't feel annoyed at finding his own head stuck on the twelfth pole. On each of the three

days the mares scamper off in all directions, leaving Ivan in despair; but each night they are safely driven home, first by a flock of outlandish birds, next by a lot of wild beasts, and lastly by a swarm of angry bees. In the dead of night Prince Ivan laid hands on a magic colt, and rode off on it across the fairy bridge. The Baba Yaga followed in hot pursuit, driving along in an iron mortar, brushing the trail with a broom, and sweeping cobwebs from the sky, like the "old woman, whither so high," of our own nurseries. She drove fearlessly on to the bridge, but when she was midway it broke in two, and a savage death overtook her in the fiery stream. Then all was up with Koshchei the Deathless, in spite of his surname; for straightway came Ivan and carried off Marya Morevna on his heroic steed; and when Koshchei caught up with them they just cracked his skull, and built a funeral pyre, and burned him to ashes on it.

Of the mythical incidents with which this wild legend is crowded, we must go back and pick up one or two which we could not conveniently notice on the way. We observed that Marya Morevna is like the Norse Brynhild in her character of an Amazon; she is like her also in being separated from her lover, who has to go through long wanderings and many trials before he can recover her. The theme, with many variations, is most elaborately worked out in the classic story of Odysseus, and it is familiar to every one in the Arabian tales of "Beder and Johara" and of "Kamaralzaman and Budoor." Another and more curious feature is the sudden recovery of gigantic strength by Koshchei the Deathless as soon as he has taken a drink of water. This notion is illustrated in many

Aryan tales, but in none more forcibly than in the Bohemian story of "Yanechek<sup>1</sup> and the Water Demon." A poor widow's mischievous boy having been drowned, the mother some time after succeeds in capturing the water demon while he is out of his element, roaming about on land. She drags him home to her hut, and ties him tight with a rope nine times plaited, and builds a fearful fire in the oven, which so scorches and torments the fiend that he is prevailed upon to tell her how to get down into the water kingdom and release her Yanechek. Everything succeeds until Yanechek is restored to the dry land, and learns how his enemy is tied hand and foot in the hut. Overcome with a silly desire for revenge, he runs home, picks up a sharp hatchet, and throws it at the water demon, thinking to split his head open and finish him. But the horrible fiend, changing suddenly into a huge black dog, jumps aside as the axe descends, and the sharp edge falls on the ninefold plaited rope and severs it. The dog, freed from his fetters, springs to the empty water-jug standing on the table, and thrusting in his paw succeeds in touching one wet drop that remained at the bottom. Instantly, then, the demon recovered his strength, and the drop of water became an overwhelming torrent, that swallowed up Yanechek, and his mother, and the house, and the region round about, and went off roaring down the hillside, leaving nothing but a dark and gloomy pool, which is there to this day, at that self-same spot in Bohemia, with the legend still hovering about it.

<sup>1</sup> The diminutive *Yanechek* means "Johnny." The name of the grand Bohemian actress, Fanny *Janaushek*, would seem to be equivalent to the English name "Johnson."

These examples may suffice to illustrate what is meant when it is said that the thousands of stories which constitute the body of Aryan folk-lore are made up of a few mythical incidents combined in an endless variety of ways. The perfect freedom with which the common stock of mythical ideas is handled in the different stories does not seem consistent with the notion that as a general thing one story has been copied from another, or handed over by any literary process from one people to another. On the other hand, this freedom is what one would expect to find in stories passed from mouth to mouth, careful to preserve the scattered leading motives based on immemorial tradition, but grouping the incidents in as many fresh ways as musicians in their melodies combine the notes of the scale.

That there has been a very large amount of copying and of lateral transmission I am not for a moment concerned to deny. But such lateral transmission does not suffice to account for the great stock of mythical ideas common to the civilized peoples of Europe and a large part of Asia. An immemorial community of tradition is needed for this. It has been a foible of many writers on mythology to apply some one favourite method of explanation to everything, to try to open all the doors in the enchanted castle of folk-lore with the same little key. Futile attempts of this sort have too often thrown discredit upon the study of myths and folk-tales. The subject is too rich in its complexity to admit of such treatment. In an essay written a quarter of a century ago, entitled "Werewolves and Swan Maidens," I tried to show how a great number of utterly different circumstances might combine to generate a single group of superstitions and tales.

Euhemerism was in the main an unsound theory, but it surely accounts for some things. All myths are not stories of the Sun and the Dawn, or of the Rain-cloud and the Lightning, but a great many myths are. The solar theory explains some things, distorted history explains others, reminiscences of savage custom explains others. In such complex ways, in the dim prehistoric dawn of human intelligence, divers mythical ideas originated, like the personification of the sun as an archer, or a frog, or the lightning as a snake. These simpler ideas, the rudimentary elements of folk-tales, occur all over the world and among races in widely different stages of culture. They are evidently an inheritance from very low stages of barbarism, and their possession by different and remote peoples is no proof of any community of tradition, except in so far as it shows that all civilized peoples have at some time or other passed through similar stages of barbaric thought. There is no reason why the simpler mythical ideas should not be originated independently by different people, over and over again. For example, the daily repetition of the sun's course across the sky, with very small variation, aroused men's curiosity in a very primitive stage of culture. Why should that bright strong creature always go in the same path? It was natural for savages to answer such a question by inventing stories of some ancestral warrior that once caught the sun in a net or with a big hook and forced it ever afterward to do his bidding. Thus originated the Sun-catcher myths which we find in such numbers among barbarous and savage peoples in America and Polynesia. The Greek, in his stories of Herakles performing superhuman tasks at the behest of Eurystheus, was



working with his greater wealth of fancy at exactly the same problem. But the possession in common of the conception of the Sun as a slave or thrall in no wise proves community of culture between the Greek and the Polynesian, except in so far as it illustrates how the Greek came from ancestors who at some time passed through a stage of thinking more or less like that in which the Polynesian has remained.

The resemblances between the folk-tales of civilized peoples are much closer, and enter much more into details, than the likenesses between simple mythical ideas which seem to be the common property of all races. Nobody would ever think of maintaining that the folk-tales of India and Scandinavia and Ireland had severally an independent origin. Long-continued community of tradition is the only cause which will account for the great body of the common lore.

Let us now see how the elementary mythical incidents, out of which Aryan folk-tales are woven, are in many cases to be interpreted. I said a moment ago that all folk-tales are not nature myths, but undoubtedly a good many folk-tales are. Our friend Koshchei the Deathless is a curious and interesting personage; let us see what we can make of him.

Between the Russian legend of Koshchei and the Hindu legend of Punchkin we have noted some general resemblances. Both these characters are mischief makers, with whom the hearer is not expected to sympathize, and who finally meet their doom at the hands of the much-tried and much-wandering hero of the story. Both carry off beautiful women, who coquet with them just enough to lure them to destruction. Such resemblances may not suffice to prove their



mythologic identity, but a more specific likeness is not wanting. The Russian legends of Koshchei are many, and in one of them his life depends on an egg which is in a duck shut up in a casket underneath an oak tree, far away. In all the main incidents this version coincides with the story of Punchkin, up to the smashing of the egg by Prince Ivan, which causes the death of the deathless Koshchei. There can thus be no doubt that the two personages stand for the same mythical idea. Again, we have seen that Koshchei is in his most singular characteristic identifiable with the water demon of the Bohemian tale. In several Russian legends of the same cycle, the part of Koshchei is played by a water-snake, who at pleasure can assume the human form. In view of the entire grouping of the incidents, one can hardly doubt that this serpent belongs to the same family with Typhon, Ahi, and Echidna, and is to be counted among the robber Panis, the enemies of the solar deity Indra, who steal the light and bury it in distant caverns, but are sure to be discovered and discomfited in the end. The dawn nymph—Marya Morevna, Daughter of the Sea, or whatever other name she may assume—is always true to her character, which is to be consistently false to the demon of darkness, with whom she coquets for a while, but only to inveigle him to destruction at the hands of her solar lover. The separation of the bright hero, Odysseus, or Kamaralzeman, or Prince Ivan, from his twilight bride, and his long nocturnal wanderings in search of her, exposed on the way to all manner of perilous witchcraft, which he invariably baffles,—all these incidents are transparent enough in their meaning. The horrid old witch, the Baba Yaga, is in many

respects the ugly counterpart of the more agreeable Kalypso and Kirke, or of the abominable Queen Labe in the Arabian tale of "Beder and Johara." The Baba Yaga figures very extensively in Russian folk-lore as a malignant fiend, and one prominent way in which she wreaks her malice is to turn her victims into stone. Herein she agrees with the Gorgon Medusa and the magician Punchkin. Why the fiends of darkness should be described as petrifying their victims is perhaps not obvious, until we reflect that throughout an immense circle of myths the powers of winter are indiscriminately mixed up with those of the night time, as being indiscriminately the foes of the sun god Zeus or Indra. That the demon of winter should turn its victims into stone for a season, until they are released by the solar hero, is in no wise incomprehensible, even to our mature and prosaic style of thinking. The hero who successfully withstands the spell of the Gorgon, after many less fortunate champions have succumbed to it, is the indomitable Perseus, who ushers in the springtime.

The malignant characteristics of Punchkin are thus, in the Russian tale, divided between Koshchei and his ally, the Baba Yaga. It is in this random, helter-skelter way that the materials of folk-lore are ordinarily put together. But the instinct of the story-teller is here correct enough, for he feels that these demons really belong to the same family, though he cannot point, as the scholar can, to the associations of ideas which have determined what characteristics are to be assigned them. It cannot be too carefully borne in mind that the story-teller knows nothing whatever of the ancient mythical significance of the incidents

which he relates. He recites them as they were told to him, in pursuance of some immemorial tradition of which nobody knows either the origin or the meaning. Yet in most instances the contrast between the good and the evil powers, between the god of light and warmth and comfort on the one hand and the fiends of darkness and cold and misery on the other, is so distinctly marked in the features of the immemorial myth that the story-teller—ignorant as he is of the purport of his talk—is not likely altogether to overlook it. As a general rule the attributes of Hercules are but seldom confounded with those of Cacus. Now and then, however, a confusion occurs, as we might expect, where there is no obvious reason why a particular characteristic should be assigned to a good rather than to an evil hero. In this way some of the relatively neutral features in a solar myth have been assigned indifferently to the powers of light and the powers of darkness. It seems to have puzzled Max Müller that, in the myth of the Trojan War, the night demon Paris should appear invested with some of the attributes of solar heroes. But I think it is natural that this should be so when we consider how far the myth-makers were from intending anything like an allegory, and how slightly they were bound by any theoretical consistency in the use of their multifarious materials. The old antithesis of the good and the bad has generally been well sustained in the folk-lore which has descended from the myths of antiquity, but incidents not readily thus distinguishable have been parcelled out very much at random. Bearing this in mind, we have no difficulty in understanding why the black magician's

life depends on the integrity of an egg, or some other such object, outside of him. In the legends we have been considering, it is the fiend of darkness who is thus conditioned, but, originally, it is beyond all question that the circumstance refers to the sun. Out of a hundred legends of this class, it is safe to say that ninety represent the career of the hero as bound up with the duration of an egg. And here, I think, we come close to the primitive form of the myth. This mysterious egg is the roc's egg which the malign African Efreet asked Aladdin to hang up in the dome of his palace. It is the sun; and when the life of the sun is destroyed, as when he goes down, the life of the hero who represents him is also destroyed. From this mythical source we have the full explanation of the singular fate of such personages as Meleagros, and Punchkin, and Koshchei the Deathless.

It is an odd feature of Koshchei that, while invariably distinguished as immortal, he is invariably slain by his solar adversary. But herein what have we to note save the fact that the night demon, though perpetually slain, yet rises again, and presents a bold front, as before, to the solar hero? In the mythology of the American Indians we have this everlasting conflict between the dark and the bright deities. The West, or the spirit of darkness, contends with the East, or the spirit of light. The struggle begins on the mountains, and the West is forced to give ground. The East drives him across rivers and over mountains and lakes, until at last they come to the brink of this world. "Hold!" cries the West; "hold, my son! You know my power and that it is impossible to kill me!" Nothing can be more transparent than the

meaning of all this ; and it is in just this way that the deathless Koshchei is slain again and again by his solar antagonist.

Conversely, among the incidents of the legend which we omitted as too cumbrous for citation is one in which Prince Ivan is chopped into small pieces by Koshchei, and is brought to life again only by most weird magic. What can be more obvious than that here we have the perennial conflict between Day and Night,—the struggle that knows no end, because both the antagonists are immortal ?

As for the conception of grateful beasts, who in so many legends aid the solar hero in time of need, I think it is most likely derived from a mingling together of ancient myths in which the sun himself figures as a beast. In various ancient myths the sun is represented as a horse or a bull, or even as a fish, — Oannes or Dagon, — who swims at night through a subterranean ocean from the west, where he has disappeared, to the east, whence he is to emerge. The cock is also, quite naturally, a solar animal, and his cheerful crow is generally the signal at which ghosts and night demons depart in confusion. In popular legends, in which these primitive connections of ideas have been blurred and partially forgotten, we need not be surprised to find these and other solar beasts assisting the solar hero.

The beast, on the other hand, who enlists his services in support of the powers of darkness is usually a wolf, or a serpent, or a fish. In many legends the sun is supposed to be swallowed by a fish at nightfall, and cast up again at daybreak ; and in the same way the wolf of darkness devours little Red Riding Hood, the



dawn nymph, with her robe of crimson twilight, and, according to the German version, yields her up whole and sound when he is cut open next day. But the fish who devours the sun is more often a water-snake, or sea-dragon, and we have seen that Koshchei the Deathless is connected by ties of kinship with these mythical animals. In the readiness with which Koshchei and the water fiend of the Bohemian legend undergo metamorphosis we are reminded of the classic Proteus. But in the suddenness with which their giant strength is acquired we seem to have a reminiscence of the myth of Hermes, the god of the winds in the Homeric Hymn, who, while yet an infant in the cradle, becomes endowed with giant powers, and works mischief with the cloud cattle of Apollo, retreating afterward through the keyhole, and shrinking back into his cradle with a mocking laugh. This mythical conception duly reappears in the Arabian story of the Efreet whom the fisherman releases from a bottle, who instantly grows into a gigantic form that towers among the clouds.

Thus in these curious stories, to which our children listen to-day with breathless interest, we have the old mythical notions of primitive people most strangely distorted and blended together. We may fairly regard them as the alluvial refuse which the stream of tradition has brought down from those distant highlands of mythology where our primeval ancestors recorded their crude and childlike impressions of the course of natural events. Out of the mouths of babes comes wisdom; and so from this quaint medley of nursery lore we catch glimpses of the thoughts of mankind in ages of which the historic tradition has utterly vanished.



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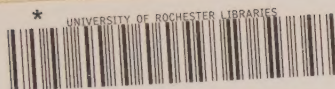






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